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SERMONS

OF

REV. JOSEPH I. FOOT, D.D.,

LATE PRESIDENT ELECT OF WASHINGTON COLLEGE,
EAST TENNESSEE:

WITH

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH,

BY

REV. GEORGE FOOT.

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PREFACE.

The Editor of this Work has been influenced by a desire to advance the cause of truth, and to gratify the wishes of numerous friends, who desired to possess some permanent memorial of Dr. Foot. The wish has often been expressed by some of the people of his late charge at Knoxville, that the volume should contain the Sermons which he delivered to them. To some extent this wish has been gratified. Yet some of them, the publication of which would have been peculiarly gratifying to them, because of their local application, were too exclusively of this character to be interesting to the public generally. Fifteen of the Sermons were revised and prepared for the press by his own hand, and would have been published some months since, had his life been spared. The others have been selected from his manuscripts with a view to form, in connexion with those prepared by himself, a connected view of some of the prominent Truths of the Gospel. In order to give as much of variety and of interest to the volume as possible, several sermons have been selected

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which contain an exhibition of the character of some of the prominent men mentioned in the Scriptures.

We are persuaded that the friends of truth will highly prize this volume, and that its contents need only to be known and read, in order to be appreciated. May He who communicated divine truth to direct men in the attainment of eternal life, make this volume instrumental in extending truth and righteousness in the earth.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

In giving a sketch of the life of Dr. Foot, we can do but little more than to present an outline of his history. It is not known that he kept a Diary, or that he has left materials from which any important facts in his history can be derived.

Rev. Joseph I. Foot, D. D., was born at Watertown in Connecticut, on the seventeenth day of November, 1796. Not long after his birth, his parents made a public profession of religion, and maintained a consistent character as followers of Christ. Their children, of which Dr. Foot was the eldest, were dedicated to God in baptism, and early instructed in the principles of the Christian religion. His parents removed to Goshen, when he was about four years of age. Soon after this event, he went to reside with his maternal grandfather at Washington, Connecticut. Here, he was diligently instructed in divine truth, and especially in the Westminster Assembly's Shorter Catechism, the whole of which was so perfectly committed to memory, that he could repeat it either forwards or backwards. Here the pastor of the church, Rev. Ebenezer Porter, D. D., the late venerable President of the Theological Seminary at Andover, was accustomed to instruct the children and youth of his congregation in the shorter catechism, on the Sabbath day during the summer months. To this course of instruction by parents and friends, and by the pastor of the church, may be traced those unchanging views of Christian doctrine, as inculcated in the Word

of God, which he afterwards maintained. The shorter catechism unquestionably had its influence in forming those views, with regard to the character of God and the plan of salvation, which afterwards became the foundation of his hope of acceptance with God, and which gave a strictly evangelical character to all his ministrations. The writer can distinctly remember that, on the Sabbath day, after public worship was ended, the family were called together, and the entire catechism was repeated by them from Sabbath to Sabbath, for a long course of years. As the result of this course of instruction in connexion with other means of grace, every member of the family has expressed the hope of pardon and eternal life, except one who died in infancy. They have all been led to embrace religion in early life. And we may here be indulged in suggesting that a similar course of instruction, in that excellent summary of Christian doctrine, and by other appropriate helps, usually produces a similar result. Hundreds of ministers and of private Christians, can attest the correctness of this remark.

While we are gratified with every laudable effort to promote Sabbath-school instruction, we must be permitted to say, that from the nature of the instructions there imparted, there is often an indefiniteness, which neither defines nor classifies the truths of the gospel. To obviate this defect in Sabbath-schools is exceedingly difficult. And while Christian parents gratefully receive the assistance of Sabbath-school instruction, it becomes their duty, *by instruction in the family*, to supply the defects which are incidental to Sabbath-school organizations.

Dr. Foot possessed an uncommonly retentive memory. All the incidents of childhood and youth were distinctly retained through life. At an early age, he made respectable attainments in the usual branches of a common education. His powers of memory contributed to his

rapid advancement in subsequent life. It may safely be doubted whether an important fact, or event, or date, or name which he had once known, ever escaped him.

When he was about fourteen years of age, his parents removed to West Granville, Massachusetts. In the year 1815, the Spirit of the Lord was poured upon that place, and an unusually large number in that congregation were added to the church. Of these, four afterwards devoted themselves to the work of the ministry, two of whom still survive. Dr. Foot was among the first fruits of this work.

At an early stage in his religious experience, he labored to comprehend the evidence of a regenerate state. For this purpose he read attentively Edwards on Religious Affections; then Edwards on the Will; and other works of a similar character. Thus his earliest religious exercises were guided by a course of investigation which led him to discriminate between truth and error, both in doctrine and in Christian experience. To this fact may be traced his almost intuitive perception of the tendency of the new views and *measures* which were constantly springing up around him, and his firm resistance of every departure from the doctrines of the gospel.

Near the close of the same year, he resolved to devote himself to the work of the ministry, and accordingly commenced the usual course of study preparatory to admission to college, under the instruction of Rev. Timothy M. Cooley, D. D., of East Granville, Massachusetts. Here he enjoyed the benefits of instruction from one who has probably done more to form the character of youth for future usefulness, and especially for the gospel ministry, than any private instructor now among the living in this country. The writer would do injustice to his own feelings, and to the venerable Dr. Cooley, should he here omit the acknowledgment, that the influence of

his instructions and counsels and godly example, upon the men who have enjoyed them, will be as imperishable as memory itself. No student who has the sensibilities of a man can remember the days which he spent under Dr. Cooley's instruction, without the warmest emotions of gratitude.

After spending about six months under the instruction of Dr. Cooley, Dr. Foot entered Phillips' Academy at Andover. After spending one year in that institution, he returned and spent the summer at Dr. Cooley's, and in the ensuing autumn, entered Union College. Here he spent four years. During his collegiate course, he was unusually attentive to all the regulations of the institution, and to his duties as a student. His uniform habit was to rise at four o'clock in the morning. He passed through the entire collegiate course without being once marked for delinquency or disobedience. He was equally distinguished for correct and extensive scholarship. In the language of a classmate who has since held an important office in the college, his standing as a scholar is thus described: "In the learned languages, and in the studies of the college generally, he ranked among the first in his class;" and after receiving his diploma, he received, from the faculty of the college, testimonials that his standing was inferior to none of his classmates. He was graduated in a large class in July, 1821. During the latter part of 1819, and the early part of 1820, an interesting and powerful revival of religion was enjoyed. In this work he manifested a deep interest. It was a period of solemn and delightful interest, in which every Christian connected with the institution greatly rejoiced. It was a matter of astonishment to the writer, who occupied, at the time, the same room with him, how he could devote so much of his time to this work, and yet maintain his high standing as a scholar.

During his last year in college he was brought to the brink of the grave by severe sickness, which greatly impaired his constitution, and impeded his progress for several years.

In the autumn of 1821, he became a member of the Theological Seminary at Andover. Here he completed a full course of three years. He had a peculiar fondness for the study of languages, and during his first theological year he read through the Hebrew Bible. In the other departments of theological science, he was equally distinguished. Such was his reputation as a sound oriental scholar, that the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, appointed him a missionary to Jerusalem. After giving the subject a mature and prayerful consideration, he declined the appointment, on account of the state of his health.

Having received licensure and ordination as an evangelist, he went to South Carolina. There, he labored at Barnwell Court House eight or ten months, with manifest usefulness to the people: and he received from them decided testimonials of their approbation, and of their regret in view of his departure. He returned without any material improvement of his health. He continued, however, to preach, and labored for several months in Boston.

He received an invitation to Epping, in New Hampshire, where the congregation soon called him unanimously to be their pastor. This call, however, he declined, and after three months returned to his father's house. While there he was called to commit his father to the grave. Shortly after this event, he was invited to West Brookfield in Massachusetts; and in October, 1826, he was installed pastor of the church and congregation in that place, to which he sustained the pastoral

relation for nearly six years. He was married at Boston, October 5th, 1826, to Miss Louisa Battelle, a native of Boston, and youngest daughter of Ebenezer Battelle, who was a graduate of Harvard University. They had no children.

At an early period of his labors among that people, the Holy Spirit was poured out and a general revival was enjoyed, and the church received large accessions, and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost was multiplied. Some of the subjects of this revival have gone to proclaim salvation to the heathen in this, and in foreign lands, and others to their final account. Of those who have been added to the church since his removal, more than forty have dated their impressions from the period of his labors. One of the individuals who was led to embrace the Saviour under his ministry, who is now a missionary among the Indians, in the vicinity of the Rocky Mountains, in a letter dated February 6th, 1838, says: "I can never forget those who have so long sought my soul. O no: I shall never forget the anxious-room where my dear minister, with tears, used to entreat me to flee from the wrath to come, and point me to the sinner's friend. I can never forget the study where with me he has knelt, and poured out his full soul in prayer to God, in my behalf.—I wish once more to assure you of my love, and to ask you to pray for me. I know you will do it. You cannot forget one for whose salvation you have so long labored."

In the summer of 1831, Dr. Foot took a journey to the western part of New York, for the benefit of his health. But returning without any material improvement, he deemed it his duty to ask a dismission from his people. After a lecture preparatory to the communion, several of the fathers of the church met at his study

and entreated him to delay, and to try the effect of another journey to the south, to which he consented. When he arrrived in New York he was attacked by a fever, and confined to his bed for seven weeks. During this period, faint hopes of his recovery were entertained. But through the blessing of God upon the unremitting assiduity, and unwearied exertions of his physicians, his disease was so far removed as to enable him to return in safety to his people. He was unable, however, to preach, until the latter part of the winter; having been disabled for pastoral labor for nearly seven months.

About this time, disorders arose in his congregation, against which he felt himself, for want of health, unable to contend. He therefore asked and obtained a dismission from his people. As a proof of their attachment to him, they continued his salary not only during his inability to fill the pulpit, but for six months after his dismission.

The following year he spent chiefly in travelling; and in the summer of 1833, he received a call from the church and congregation of Salina in New York, where he continued to labor for two years, until the cholera had cut down, or driven so many from the place that they were unable to sustain the ministry. Having received a call from Courtland, about thirty miles distant, he accepted it, and entered upon this new field of labor in June, 1835.

That portion of his labors bestowed on the church at Salina was attended with peculiar trials. Perfectionism was beginning to assume its distinctive form, and Salina was the spot where the most vigorous efforts were made to draw away disciples from the faith of the gospel. There the leaders of that fanatical and wicked sect attempted, by holding protracted meetings and a variety of other means, to make inroads upon the church.

There perfection in knowledge, the faith and the power of working miracles, the gift of tongues, and even the power of raising the dead were openly professed. There they also professed to believe that the obligations of the moral law, on those who believe in Christ, were abrogated. They professed to be *personally* united to Christ, and to the Holy Ghost. Some of these errors were found in the church, and those who were known to hold them were speedily excluded. Still, there were individuals in the surrounding country who were ready on every occasion to employ their influence, in order to spread errors so entirely subversive of practical godliness, and who imagined themselves to be rendering an acceptable service to God by obtruding them upon the church. The great misfortune, at this crisis, was that some, in whose professions of piety the community had previously had confidence, and even some who had professed to be most ardent friends of revivals, were leaders in this crusade against the church, so that these errors were supported by loud professions of superior sanctity. They professed *themselves* what they claimed in behalf of the system they advocated, viz. that *they were perfect.* To Dr. Foot, the impiety, and abuse, and self-esteem of such were a great annoyance. These errors he labored to correct by warnings both in public and in private. He published, at this crisis, three sermons which were designed to expose and refute them; and there is reason to believe that their influence was extensively felt. About the same time he published an article on the same subject in the "LITERARY AND THEOLOGICAL REVIEW," entitled "THE NEW DISPENSATION, OR PERFECTIONISM," which was designed to correct this error, which was beginning to spread in other portions of the country. This was followed by another in 1836, entitled "AN INQUIRY CONCERNING THE THEOLOGICAL ORI-

GIN OF PERFECTIONISM AND ITS CORRELATIVE BRANCHES OF FANATICISM."

During his residence at Salina and Courtland, he manifested a deep interest in the prosperity of the Theological Seminary at Auburn, in which institution he held for a time the office of chairman of the examining committee.

After the meeting of the General Assembly in 1837, he resigned his charge at Courtland, and removed to Westport in Connecticut, to which place he was called. During the following year he received calls from various other places; but eventually accepted one from Knoxville, in Tennessee, where he entered on his duties in May, 1839. While at Westport, he united with the Presbytery of Bedford in New York, by examination, and continued in connexion with the Old School party in the church until he closed his career on earth. We are not to suppose, however, that his theological views were changed at this period. His sermons, after this event, exhibit the same doctrinal views with those which are dated anterior to the division of the church: and we regard the sentiments which are contained in his sermons, as views of divine truth in which all sound Presbyterians of both parties entirely concur. What particular circumstances led him to forsake his brethren of the Geneva Synod, and to unite with the opposite party, we have no means of knowing. This much, however, is known, that for years, he had cherished no sympathy with the sentiments and measures of some who had made themselves conspicuous in that portion of the church. The circumstance that he had, from his location, to encounter some of the most erratic and unreasonable men in the church—men whose doctrines and practices were undermining its peace and purity—undoubtedly had its influence. That such evils existed cannot be

doubted. The extent to which they existed, has long been a subject of fierce debate. That there was a great degree of laxness in some ecclesiastical bodies in regard to these errors, and those who propagated them, is beyond dispute. But the justice of the correctives applied by the Assembly has been, and will continue to be, a source of conflicting opinions. He discovered also in some ministers a disposition to supplant and secretly to injure their brethren, by unkind and ungenerous insinuations, either to gratify some personal dislike, or to accomplish some favorite purpose. This spirit has unquestionably been a source of deep and incurable injury to ministerial character, and to the cause of pure religion. He possessed a mind which scorned such conduct, and has often been heard to speak of it with decided disapprobation. For the course which he ultimately adopted with regard to his ecclesiastical relations, he undoubtedly had reasons which, to his own mind, were satisfactory. Although we may dissent from his opinions on this point, there is abundant evidence that he believed his course to be right, and that he conscientiously pursued it. Having resolved on his future course, and formed his ecclesiastical connexions, he firmly maintained most of the leading opinions of that portion of the church with which he was associated. He seldom put his hand to the plough and looked back, nor was he easily influenced to abandon any position which he had deliberately taken.

In the course of two months after he had entered upon his duties at Knoxville, he was "elected by the unanimous voice of the Board of Trustees of Washington College to the presidency of that institution." This was a station to which his literary taste and qualifications were peculiarly adapted. He regarded this new field of labor with a peculiar solicitude. He hesitated

long, and sought the opinions of others whom he regarded as competent advisers with respect to the various aspects of his duty. In reference to this call, he says, in a letter to a dear friend: "I have done as Hezekiah did when the Assyrians wrote to him; I have taken the letter and spread it before the Lord. I know not what to do; three months ago I should not have hesitated, but now I tremble—may God direct." In another letter also dated at Knoxville, he says, "I am becoming much attached to these hills, and valleys, and people, and it will be a very *hard* thing to leave, even for the presidency of a college." * * * * * "Now, the corporations of two colleges are applying to me to take charge of them, as their president, and I am so well situated for usefulness, that I tremble at a change." As we are in possession of but few of his letters on this momentous subject, we will insert some extracts from a letter of a valued friend—the Rev. T. M. Cooley, D. D., of East Granville, Massachusetts.

East Granville, September 12th, 1839.

"Rev. and Dear Sir,

"Your kind favor, of the 28th ult., came to hand by the last mail, and has been read and considered with deep interest. I can easily conceive that the question now presented for your decision, is one of as great moment as can ever be presented to a minister of the gospel in our country. The ordinary work of a gospel minister, is one from which the shoulders of an angel might shrink!—how much more arduous the work to be a *teacher of ministers!* How great the responsibility to give shape to the intellectual, moral, and religious character of missionaries and pastors of the church, and to our future congressmen, senators, and judges!—To this work, dear brother, you are now called, and I do

not wonder that you meet the call with tears, and prayers, and inquiries. I could wish that I was a more able counsellor, in this case, than I am. May the Lord direct *me!* May he direct *you!*

"I am of course a stranger in respect to the state and prospects of southern colleges. What are the facilities and difficulties in managing them? How endowed? Whether well furnished with libraries and philosophical apparatus? Whether located in a region pleasant, healthful? What the character of the students? What amount of religious influence? &c., are questions which you have doubtless proposed, and they are inquiries to which I shall have no reference in my remarks.

"Having been connected with a New England college, longer than almost any one among the living, or the dead, I must be a poor proficient, if I am not able to make some suggestions, on the subject which you have presented.

"I can sympathize with you in the difficulties and trials which you now feel. . . 'How can I relinquish the ministry which I love?' I subscribe fully to the sentiment in the Cambridge Platform—'One consecrated to the ministry is thus, *pro termino vitæ*.' Why relinquish the ministry? President Griffin, on coming to the college, remarked to the Board, with *much feeling*, 'I must preach the gospel.' *He did so*, with great effect on the college. He was elected professor of divinity, I think, at his own suggestion. For his labors in that department, there was voted by the Board a small addition to his stated salary. His audience for a part of the time, was the church and congregation in town, united with the students.

"'How can I leave a large, intelligent church, all of whom are attached to me?' . . . How could Dr. Griffin leave Newark, where he had gathered in so many

spiritual children? How could Dr. Humphrey leave his ardently attached church and congregation at Pittsfield? Carry your objection out, and what will become of our colleges? Our most efficient and spiritual Presidents have been torn away from the bleeding hearts of an attached and intelligent people.

"'Am I fit to take the office?' There never was one who *was fit*, who did not make this anxious inquiry! The *unanimous* call of the trustees is the best solution of this most trying question.

"'*My habits are also nearly fixed.*' What habits? Habits of close thought, and reasoning, and of communicating the results to others? Are not these the very habits which will be needed in your new and trying situation? Dr. Humphrey remarked to me, soon after his election to the Presidency of Amherst College, that all his plans and studies had been laid out with special reference to the pastoral office. * * * And who could have filled the presidency better than Dr. Humphrey?

"'It is not unlikely, that according to the course of my ancestors, my days will be few.' This is a thought which you have suggested to me before. May you never lose sight of it. It will be like Philip's '*Memento mori.*' It may make you a good Christian, a good minister, or a good president. It can have no bearing as you must perceive on the question now to be decided. You may as well die as Davies and Edwards did, the first year of your presidency, as die in a pastoral relation.

"'Is my education of the right sort?' I feel prepared to say frankly, and without flattery, that I can scarcely conceive how it could have been better, unless you had spent your days in a professorship at some college.

"'Shall I not utterly fail in government?' This

inquiry has cost me more thought than any, or all others. It is one of paramount importance. My first impressions were that you might fail, in consequence of that sociableness which I was about to call *second nature*, but it may be traced even farther back. I remember well the interview to which you allude, at my house twenty-four years ago. I remember with what *ease* you opened to me your case as a poor, perishing sinner. I am sure that you can never be such a president as Ezra Stiles, D. D., LL. D., under whom I was educated, was. Your habits are formed. I am aware, too, that manners and times are changed since 1788. The student is not now required to uncover his head ten rods before he meets the president, eight rods from a professor, three rods from a tutor;—to uncover his head when he speaks to a sophomore;—to stand at the gate if a superior is within two rods behind you, unless he condescendingly beckon you to pass!!! Such were the by-laws which were gravely read and seriously inculcated on my class, at our admission into Yale College. In these days of free inquiry, of liberty and equality, I am prepared to admit, that instead of failing in government, you will succeed even beyond your own hopes. Miss ———— of the female seminary is said to be gifted with unlimited sociableness, which was regarded as an omen of failure. It has been far otherwise.

After looking at all points, I can find no reason for dissuading you from accepting the high appointment. I trust that I have carried your cause to my covenant God. I can only say, so far as I have light on the subject, *the door is open for you to the presidency of Washington College*. This I say on condition that you find the details and circumstances to be agreeable. I can most cordially wish you *God speed!* Whether

your life may be long, or short, may it be eminently useful to the church and to the world."

After mature deliberation and consultation with eminent scholars in different sections of the country, he accepted the presidency. Considerable sums of money had been contributed for the benefit of the college, in anticipation of his acceptance, and a deep interest in its welfare had been excited. Before him was an extended field of usefulness, and the interest awakened in the community, with respect to the college, seemed to indicate that the institution would be amply sustained.

On the 27th of March, the corporation of the college conferred on him the degree of doctor of divinity.

On the 9th of April following, having signified his acceptance of the presidency, he left Knoxville for the purpose of visiting the college. At Rogersville he attended a sacramental meeting, and preached on the Sabbath, April 12th, from a part of the apostolic benediction: "The communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all." On the next Sabbath, April 19th, he preached at New Providence, from another part of the apostolic benediction: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." This was his last sermon. It is very remarkable that he should have closed his ministerial labors on earth with these appropriate words, and thus unconsciously pronounce his farewell address to his Christian brethren, to some of the corporation of the college, and to some of the professors with whom he expected so soon to be associated.

With a melancholy interest will his valedictory be remembered, connected as it was with the scenes of the sacramental table, and followed so suddenly by the termination of his earthly career. It is questionable whether the prominent events of this concluding scene could have been more appropriately arranged, even had

he known that the day of his departure was at hand. The coincidence is seen to be still more striking and beautiful when it is remembered that he preached from different parts of the apostolic benediction on the two preceding Sabbaths, both of which were seasons of communion at the table of the Lord.

In regard to his reputation as a Christian, a divine, and a scholar, we prefer that others should speak, and therefore insert the following extracts from the public prints where he last resided.

"On Monday, 20th inst., Dr. Foot left New Providence, thirteen miles above Rogersville, on his way to Washington College, with the expectation of being inaugurated its president on the next Wednesday. He crossed Bay's Mountain through M'Pheater's Gap, a rugged and lonely way. After sun-set, he was passing the house of Mr. Thomas M'Adams, about three miles from Leesburg, which he expected to reach that evening. As he was approaching the house, which was on the hill above him, a large dog dashed through a pair of bars, making a great noise. The horse took fright and wheeled suddenly around, running with great rapidity down the hill a little out of the road, and was about to plunge among rocks, and into a ditch, which in order to avoid he made a slight turn in his course, and just at that moment stumbled and fell, dashing Dr. Foot, who was a heavy man, with great violence against a rock. He fell on his right side and back. The force of the fall precipitated him a few feet beyond the rock into a ditch. Help was immediately obtained, and he was taken to the house. Medical aid was procured as soon as possible. It was found by examination that two or three of his ribs were broken, and splintered, and that his lungs were pierced by the broken splinters of the ribs. He remained at this place

until the next day, when, in consequence of the smallness of the apartment where he lay, he was removed on a litter to the house of John Stephenson, Esq., about one mile distant from the place where he fell. In the course of one or two hours, after he arrived at this place, he breathed his last. His death, no doubt, proceeded from suffocation, the unavoidable result of the mangled and inflated condition of the lungs and adjoining parts. He expired about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, in twenty-two hours after his fall. He was buried on the next Thursday at Washington College, by the side of the Rev. Drs. Doak, the former Presidents of Washington College. Thus ended the career of a man who seemed but just to have entered the threshold of great and extensive usefulness.

"It may be a consolation to his friends and relations, to know that he fell amongst warm and untiring friends, where he received every attention it was possible for respect and affection to dictate. He suffered immensely, during the short space allowed him, from his fall until his death, but bore it with the utmost patience—he was not heard to utter a single groan, or give place to a single murmur.

"He was engaged to preach Judge White's funeral sermon on the next Sabbath. On this he had his heart much set. He had spent several of the preceding nights, until a late hour, preparing the sermon, and had already written about eight sheets of paper on that subject; and so great was his anxiety to preach that sermon, and also to return to his people, that he was heard more than once to inquire, whilst on his death-bed, if it were possible for him to reach Knoxville by the Sabbath?

"But that which engaged his thoughts more than any thing else was the college. About this he had con-

versed, corresponded, thought, planned, prayed, almost incessantly, for the last six months; and his last and dying words with regard to the college were—'*The college must rise! The college must go! It shall go!*'

"The day set apart for his inauguration was the very day he was to have been buried, but in consequence of an unavoidable delay in the funeral preparations, the burial did not take place until the next morning.

"His intellectual faculties were unimpaired to the last, and he died as he had lived, in the full enjoyment of the Christian's hope."

"By this mysterious and afflictive dispensation of Providence, the Church of Christ has lost a bright and shining light—the cause of literature and science, an illustrious and efficient advocate and patron—a large circle of friends and acquaintances, their pride and ornament—and a fond and devoted wife, a kind and affectionate guide and protector.

"As a faithful, zealous, and evangelical preacher of the gospel, Dr. Foot had few equals and perhaps no superiors. As a theologian, he was thoroughly conversant with the various systems of faith embraced by the different denominations in the Christian Church. As a controvertist, he made no compromise with essential error, either in the doctrines or order of the church; but with that boldness and intrepidity which characterized the Fathers of the Reformation, he combated whatever he believed to conflict with the plain canons of scripture, or to stand in opposition to the advancement of a pure, practical, and evangelical religion. As a scholar and writer, he stood pre-eminently high; and the frequent contributions of his pen to the New York Literary and Theological Review, and other periodicals of equal celebrity, have placed him on an eminence in polemic and didactic theology, to which but very few can, with

confidence, aspire.—In his intercourse with the world, he was frank and undisguised—an instructive and sociable companion—a candid, sincere, unaffected, and sympathizing friend; and in his domestic circle, a very pattern of tenderness and affection.

"The loss of such a man, at such a time, is indeed a public calamity. Zion may well invest herself in sackcloth, when those who minister so conspicuously at her altars, are snatched away from the service of her sanctuaries, when her abundant, ripe, wide, and wasting harvests call so loudly for such laborers to gather them in. But God's ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts. This painful, and to us, mysterious dispensation of Providence, if properly regarded and improved, may be blessed to the increase and prosperity of the church. It is to us all, a loud and solemn call from the grave, 'Be ye also ready, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.'

"'Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace,
Behind a frowning Providence
He hides a smiling face.'"

"The death of this distinguished individual presents another melancholy instance of that mysterious providence, by which so many of the good and of the great are cut down in the midst of their labors. A prospect of extended usefulness had just opened before him. He was called to preside over the affairs of an institution, which promised largely to become a blessing to the church and to the world. The eyes of a whole community were anxiously directed to him. And what might not have been expected from his learning and his talents? But he is cut down in the midst of his labors. His sun has set, while it is yet noon. But while we

may deplore the event, we are not permitted to question the wisdom which ordained it."

"We owe it as a tribute, to the memory of the deceased, to say, that the talents of Dr. Foot were of the highest order, and eminently fitted for the station to which he had been appointed. His learning was various and extensive, embracing almost every department of human knowledge. His social qualities were in an eminent degree engaging, and never failed to attach to him those who were permitted to enjoy his society. His piety was of the most solid kind; free from cant and *affected* humility; it was 'a tree planted by the rivers of water, bringing forth its fruit in its season.'

"On the 26th of April, the Board of Trustees met, and passed the following preamble and resolutions, viz:

"As the Rev. Joseph I. Foot, D. D., the President elect of Washington College, East Tennessee, was thrown from his horse on Monday, the 20th inst., and in consequence thereof died the next day at 4 o'clock, P. M., on his way to this college, to be inaugurated its President:

"And as the said Rev. Joseph I. Foot, D. D., was a man of superior talents, of extensive and various learning, a most able divine, and accomplished writer:

"And as the said J. I. Foot was most amiable in his social relationships, having a tongue free from guile, and a heart destitute of malice: Therefore,

"*Resolved*, That his violent and unexpected death, has deprived our college of a most able President, our church of a most zealous, pious, and effective servant, and our social circle of a most lovely companion.

"*Resolved*, That this Board express their deep and heart-felt sorrow, on account of the severe dispensation of Providence, in so unexpected a moment, taking him from us.

"*Resolved*, That this Board most cordially sympathize with the bereaved and forlorn widow of our departed friend; and would devoutly commend her to a holy and wise Providence, for comfort and support in her sore afflictions.

"*Resolved*, That a copy of the foregoing preamble and resolutions be immediately transmitted to Mrs. Foot, by the secretary, &c.

E. L. MATHES, *Secretary*."

As a further testimony on these points, we shall give some extracts from the funeral sermon delivered to his congregation at Knoxville, by a member of the corporation of the college.

"Dr. Foot was a learned man. He possessed but few equals in 'general information.' His knowledge in regard to the theological controversies in this country was unrivalled. He seemed to know every thing, about every place, in every period of American history. He was a great linguist, especially in the oriental department of philology; and possessed a thorough acquaintance with Biblical and exegetical criticism. He was gifted by a kind Providence with superior talents, and possessed many characteristics of a truly great man. He thought intensely on whatever particular subject engaged his attention—often to the exclusion of sleep. Added to this, he had a most tenacious memory, that seemed to grasp and retain every thing that came within its reach. Accompanying these, he possessed a clear discriminating judgment. As a natural result from the possession of these mental qualifications, he wrote an admirable style. It was not gorgeous, burdened with metaphor and glowing figures: it was not verbose: his ideas were not enveloped in glittering clouds of unmeaning words—but they were clear, concise, ele-

gant, and forcible. And if there was any one species of figure that he dealt in more than another, it was pleasant, good natured, but pungent irony. This he could wield with tremendous force.

"As a member of the social circle, his predominent traits of character were benevolence and generosity. He was eminently compassionate, and was always ready to sympathize with suffering, no matter where it was found, whether in man or brute. He was also remarkably candid, and would speak plainly—terribly so—yet with so much generosity and good feeling, and with such a pleasant countenance, that it was impossible to take offence at what he said. And you felt assured when he was done, that he did not feel more than he spoke. His tongue was free from guile, his heart was a stranger to malice. He was not one of those

> 'Who, smooth of tongue, in purpose insincere,
> Hides fraud in smiles, whilst death is ambushed there.'

But he spoke his mind boldly, fearlessly, and unreservedly; and when he was done, all was said—no lurking grudge remained.

"Dr. Foot possessed great love for truth, for doctrinal, Bible truth. He had suffered much, not only in feeling, but in his pecuniary circumstances, in consequence of his unyielding, uncompromising attachment for the truth. When, therefore, any controverted subject was the theme of conversation, he always expressed himself with great freedom. And as his knowledge with regard to such subjects was vast, and very accurate, he for the most part expressed himself positively and absolutely; but invariably with perfect good feeling, and free from all bitterness. It is rather a remarkable fact, that he could converse freely in this day of strife and controversy, upon the most exciting subjects, without

betraying the slightest emotion, inconsistent with the most perfect good feeling.

"Having been a diligent student in the early part of his life; and having a mind well stored with knowledge, he possessed elevated views of what ought to constitute a scholar, and a literary man. His standard of scholarship was therefore high. And with this he possessed a burning desire to promote the moral and intellectual cultivation of East Tennessee—his adopted home. It was this, *and this alone*, that gave rise to his extraordinary zeal for Washington College. This it was that occupied his waking and his sleeping thoughts, for the last six months. It was about this college that he loved to converse, correspond, plan, pray. His soul longed to see an institution in East Tennessee, where our sons could obtain a respectable education. And that, too, free from any sectarian bias that might be prejudicial to the well-being of our beloved church, which he loved with all his mind and soul and strength. It was in behalf of this institution that he fell and died; and concerning which, he said with his dying breath—showing his ruling passion strong in death—'*The college must rise! It must go! It shall go!*' Whether these words were prophetic or not, time will soon decide.

"Dr. Foot's piety was of a pure and elevated kind. It was not simply a piety of feeling and impulses; but a piety of noble and elevated views concerning God and divine things. He abhorred cant and affected humility. He felt that religion was not designed nor calculated to make its possessor morose and dismal—but cheerful and happy. Hence he possessed none of that gloomy, forbidden asceticism, characteristic of the ancient Pharisees. He never made pretensions to any thing which he did not feel or possess; and hence, as

he possessed naturally buoyant, lively spirits, perhaps, he may have sometimes manifested a seeming want of seriousness. But a particular acquaintance with him convinced all of his pure, elevated, and intelligent piety. He often spoke of the deep depravity of his heart by nature, and of the necessity of saving grace in order to salvation. His two great themes were, '*Fallen man* and *a risen Saviour*.' He had no confidence in human *merit*, or in human *ability*. But his language was—'If I am saved, it must be by the unaided power of the Holy Ghost—If I am saved, it must be by the unmerited righteousness of Jesus Christ.' This was his living faith, and no doubt it was his dying faith—although the moment of his dissolution was so unexpected to himself, and to those around him, that he had not an opportunity to express his dying views on the subject of religion."

After he was wounded, he expressed to a friend, several times, his belief that he should not recover—but it is not likely he expected to die so suddenly. The kind friends around him, were assisting him to turn in bed—when he said, "*stop, let me rest, I feel like fainting*"—and spoke no more—sunk back—closed his eyes and his lips. It was thought he had *only fainted*, and restoratives were used, but in vain, his Spirit had taken its flight to God!

The following among *numerous* other letters of sympathy, received by his bereaved widow soon after Dr. Foot's decease, is from a highly esteemed friend, Rev. T. M. Cooley, D. D.

East Granville, May 17th, 1840.

"My Dear and much loved Friend,

"By the last mail, I received a Knoxville paper, containing the deeply mournful announcement of the

sudden death of your beloved and lamented husband, Rev. J. I. Foot, D. D., my estimable and greatly beloved friend. Can this be *reality? Can it be?* The detail of circumstances, the deeply marked eulogium, flowing from a warm heart and skilful hand, forbids the surmise that the whole statement is not sober reality. My learned and delightful friend, with whom I have passed hours, on which the repose of sleep might have laid its claim, is now associated with other and far nobler orders of beings. And my highly esteemed friend, what can I say to you? So powerfully does my own heart bleed under this bereavement, that I fear I shall only fan the flame of that furnace in which your covenant God has caused you to be tried. But we must not despond. There are bright shades in this dark picture, and there are blessings in disguise in this deep affliction. * * * With what appropriateness can you adopt the language of the sweetly pensive and inimitable Cowper!

> 'I was a stricken deer, that left the herd
> Long since; with many an arrow deep infixed,
> My panting side was charged, when I withdrew
> To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.'

"It furnishes me a source of great satisfaction, to believe that you can also appropriate to yourself the lines of the same poet which immediately follow:

> 'There I was found by ONE who had himself
> Been hurt by the archers. In His side he bore,
> And in His hands and feet the cruel scars.
> With gentle force soliciting the darts,
> He drew them forth and healed, and bade me live.'

"In this bereavement the church mourns—the cause of truth mourns—Washington College mourns the loss of its President elect . . . Knoxville mourns. A great circle of friends in the north and in the south, mourn; with so much sympathy while *you* mourn, you must

not 'refuse to be comforted.' How soon will pious friends meet 'where all tears will be wiped away!' 'Every sorrow cuts a string, and urges us to rise.'

"There is a dark and painful mystery in your husband's decease, which we are not called upon to solve. Why one should be taken away whom the head of the church had raised up and fitted for such usefulness, is a question which, instead of attempting to solve, should lead us in humble acquiescence to adopt the language of the teacher from Heaven; 'Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight.'

"'There is an appointed time to man upon earth.' The time and manner of God's dear children's removal from earth to Heaven is subject to a divine arrangement. How dark and mysterious are such events, when viewed only by human wisdom! Why did Harriet Newell find an early grave in the Isle of France? Why were Wisner, Hall, Cornelius, Evarts, and many others taken to their happy home when so many ardent and anxious friends, when the whole American church, when the heathen world seemed to plead for their stay a little longer, in their respective spheres of eminent usefulness?

"The decease of your husband is felt through the American church as a great loss. *He was a champion of the truth!* Some of the productions of his pen, I have said to others, and may I not say to his afflicted widow, equal any thing which I have read as the production of the American press. But if he was needed in another and nobler sphere of action and of usefulness, if he be now filling a place of exalted glory in the general assembly of the first born, who shall utter a discontented murmur at his removal?

"I am fully aware that amidst all these great and consoling considerations, there is one heart that cannot but be deeply affected with this wound. The rugged

path of life, which had been cheered by the affections of one of such inestimable worth, must now be travelled *alone!* 'Lover and friend hast thou removed far from me!' But think of your covenant God, who has said, 'this light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal *weight* of glory.'

"My own affliction is great. I am a mourner with you. A thousand pleasing and mournful recollections press upon my mind. I remember well when your husband, then but a stripling, came into my study, with the deep, heartfelt inquiry, 'what must I do to be saved?' I can trace him as, by a kind Providence, he was carried through his preparations for the ministry. You know I stood with him in the hour of his consecration to the sacred work which lay so near his heart. I loved him much. On one occasion he was led, by a report, to suppose that my own death had occurred, and he was about to write a letter of condolence to my family. Strange that it should fall to my lot to perform such an office in remembrance of him.

* * * * * "In the last letter from the hand of your husband he remarks: 'If I shall ever mingle with the saints, it will be, not the result of a single *native* aspiration in me after holiness, but altogether the work of the Holy Spirit.' How truly becoming and evangelical are such views and feelings! Truly yours."

As a writer Dr. Foot had attained to great excellence. His style was neat and concise, and remarkably clear. His object was not to dazzle with affected elegance of diction, but to instruct and convince. Hence at an early period, he was solicited to publish. While a member of the Theological Seminary he published—

1. "Egypt since the Christian Era."
2. "Oration on the Jews."

3. "The Value of Revivals."

4. "The Return of the Jews to their own Land."

He has left two sermons on Intemperance, published in 1828.

"The Prominent Trait in Teachers of False Religion. 1828."

"An Historical Discourse, delivered at Brookfield, Massachusetts, November 27th, 1828, the day of the Annual Thanksgiving."

"A Sermon delivered at the Installation of Rev. Lucius W. Clarke, at North Wilbraham. 1830."

"A Sermon delivered at the Ordination of Rev. William Wolcott, at Petersham. 1830." And some other works the same year.

"A Sermon delivered at the Dedication of the Church and the Ordination of Rev. Orson Cowles, at North Woodstock, Connecticut. 1832."

"Three Sermons on Perfectionism. 1834."

The following articles were published in the Literary and Theological Review, at New York.

"The New Dispensation, or Perfectionism. 1834."

"An Inquiry concerning the Theological Origin of Perfectionism and its correlative branches of Fanaticism. 1836."

"A Review of the Memoir of Rev. L. Haynes. 1837."

"Influence of Pelagianism on the Theological Course of Rev. C. G. Finney, developed in his Sermons and Lectures. 1838."

"Origin of the Declension of Religion in the Churches. 1839."

"Maryville Theology. 1839."

His Inaugural Address, which he was on his way to deliver at Washington College, when his career was so suddenly arrested, has since been published at Knox-

ville, and also in some of the public papers in Tennessee.

With respect to his character as a writer, we have designed to say but little. The near relation existing between him and the editor, renders any remarks of this description improper. Those who have read his works already before the public, have formed their estimate of his ability as a writer; and those who may read the volume of sermons now published, will have within their reach ample means of judging.

It is proper here to observe, that his theological views were matured and expressed under circumstances adapted to lead to a thorough investigation of the oracles of God. His opinions were deliberately formed, and as deliberately maintained. He was destitute of that rashness which hastily decides, and often as hastily has the mortification of being found in the wrong.

Amidst all the theological changes which occurred around him during the period of his ministry, there is a remarkable uniformity in his views. A recent examination of a large number of his manuscript sermons, shows that he maintained the same system of doctrines from the commencement of his ministry to its close. He was "rooted and grounded in the truth," and maintained it fearlessly. Men who are inclined to ultraism in theology will find no aliment for their morbid taste in his theological views. He adopted those sentiments which have been held by evangelical writers, in all periods and nations, free alike from austerity on the one hand, and from laxness on the other.

But he has gone, suddenly gone, to test the soundness of the views of divine truth which he cherished and inculcated. The strain of piety, often rising to holy fervor, exhibited in his sermons, leaves the vivid impression

on the mind that he *loved* the truths which he taught, and that he has gone to feast upon them forever.

Few men have been more diligent or more successful students; and when he descended to the grave, one of the brightest luminaries in our literary circles was extinguished, and at a period when he was entering a field adapted to render his intellectual attainments extensively useful.

In conclusion, it may be observed, that in the family circle he was greatly beloved; and his memory will be affectionately cherished as long as any of their number shall remain. In their affliction, it is a consoling reflection that they had so bright an ornament to lose: that the insatiate archer, as he threw his deadly arrow with unerring aim, could find among them a mark so bright. We trust that that circle will yet stand unbroken before the throne of God. All who have already gone to eternity cherished the hope of pardon through the blood of Christ. All who still survive profess to be disciples of the Saviour.* Then let death sever as it may, the cords of affection here, it will only gather one after another to that world where death shall have no more power. Rest, then, beloved brother, in thy cold and lonely grave. It is but the gateway to immortal bliss, where enlarged intellect and elevated attainments shall more brightly shine, in a nobler and a broader sphere.

* The intelligence of the death of Dr. Foot appeared to be the means of awakening and leading to repentance the last member of the family, who was without hope, and also several others in the vicinity where he resides.

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

THE SINNER UNWILLING TO COME TO CHRIST.

JOHN v. 40.—"And ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life."

THE Saviour had just been declaring to those by whom he was surrounded, his own divine power and godhead. He had told them, that "as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the son of man." He told them not to be astonished at this fact, for they should yet see it confirmed. "The hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." He told them, that although his own testimony concerning his own character and his coming to judge the world would not be received by them as true, yet John had borne witness to the truth in these things. He then refers to the miracles he had wrought. The works also which I have performed bear witness that I am the Messiah, the saviour and the judge of the world. The scriptures of the Old Testament likewise testify of me; and notwithstanding my own declaration, the testimony of John, the testimony of my own miracles, and the literal accomplishment in me of the predictions in the Old Testament respecting the Messiah; notwithstand-

ing all these conspire to show that I am the Christ, yet "YE WILL NOT COME TO ME, THAT YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE." The evidence, that I am the saviour who was appointed to come into the world, is complete. The reason why you do not come to me, the saviour and the judge of the world, is to be found, not in the want of evidence that I am the Messiah. This has been abundantly furnished, and has had no effect on you. There is some reason which cannot be removed by evidence. It is an evil which evidence does not reach and has no power to overcome. It is an evil in the mind itself, rather than in the evidence of divine truth. "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

It has been common in modern times to say, that nothing is wanting in the sinner to effect his salvation but a "*determination*" to repent and to believe. And hence this and similar passages have been interpreted, ye have "*determined*" not to come unto me. Hence also it has been argued, that all which is required of the sinner is, that he should "*determine*" to serve God, that he should "*make up his mind*" to repent, that he should "*resolve*" to believe and obey. Now were it true, that a mere want of a determination, resolution, or purpose to serve God is the reason why men do not come to Christ, we should suppose that this would be recognised in the scriptures, and that a system of precepts would be given which would accord with it. Could the evil be removed by such a step as simply forming a resolution, or purpose to love him, to come to him, or to serve him, we should suppose that instead of saying, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, the command would have been, "thou shalt resolve to serve thy God with all thy heart." Instead of saying, "Look unto me and be ye saved all ye ends of the earth," the command would have been, "determine" to look unto me. Instead

of saying, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest," the command would have been, "purpose" to come unto me and I will give you rest. Instead of saying, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, *come* ye to the waters, it would have been "*resolve*" to come to the waters. If all that the scriptures require is merely a resolution or purpose, and if this is all the willingness requisite to coming to Christ, it is indeed wonderful that there are not some commands in the word of God to form resolutions and to fix a purpose to come to Christ. I do not mean to say that a purpose or design to come to Christ ought not to exist in every mind, but I wish to say, that neither purposes, resolutions, or designs to come to Christ, are actually coming to him. They are only purposes or determinations to do a duty, and are widely different things from actually performing it. Thousands have had strong purposes to go to Christ for salvation, who have never accomplished it. Thousands probably have declared their determination to serve the Lord, and have been received to the communion of the saints, whose lives soon showed that they were without God in the world. A whole nation once assembled at the mountain in the wilderness of Sinai. They heard the law of the Lord their God uttered by Jehovah himself. They resolved to obey it. They told Moses, "go thou near and hear all that the Lord our God shall say, and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, and we *will hear it and do it.*" What stronger resolution than this was ever formed, to do the things which God commands? What circumstances were ever more favorable to its performance than those in which the sons of Jacob were now placed? What stronger expressions of determination to do the will of God were ever made? If a resolution to serve God; if a determination to do his

will; if making up the mind to fear him is conversion; then were the multitudes of the Israelites who heard the law at the foot of Mount Sinai converted! If by "willing" to come and obey, the scriptures mean a "resolution to come," then were all the sons of Jacob willing to come! If the declaration of this purpose were a commitment of themselves before his people to do all his will, then were all the Israelites not only converted, but committed to do the will of our Father in heaven; for they declared, before all, their resolution to do whatever the Lord commanded them. But the question here occurs: Did the Lord recognise them upon the declaration of this resolution, and of this commitment? Did the Lord recognise them as his children? This is important, both in respect to an interpretation of the word "willing," and also in respect to a *prevalent doctrine and usage* at this day. Did the Lord recognise these Israelites as true Christians? Ah no, for Moses said, "the Lord heard the voice of your words when ye spake unto me, and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of the people, which they have spoken unto thee. They have well said all that they have spoken. Oh that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them!" Here it is plain, that notwithstanding their determination to serve the Lord and do all the things which he commanded them, *there was not such a heart in them* as would fear him and keep his commandments. From their subsequent history it is also plain, that notwithstanding this purpose to serve God, their hearts were not right with him; for within forty days they had turned aside from his ways. They made a golden calf—they worshipped it. They said of it, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

They prepared an idolatrous feast; they ate, they drank; they rose up to play; they frequently and openly rejected the authority of God; they were a generation with which he represents himself to have been angry, and at length all their carcasses fell in the wilderness. Were a resolution to serve God *all* that is requisite to become his children, then these Israelites would not have departed from him, nor been rejected by him, nor been slain in the wilderness. Nor was this peculiar to the Israelites. Thousands in every age and generation have, in common phraseology, made up their minds to serve God; they have *resolved* to serve him; they have *determined* to serve him, and have, like the Israelites, *professed* to serve him, and yet have never obeyed him. There was not such a heart in them as to fear God and keep his commandments. When our Saviour said, "ye will not come to me," he meant something more than ye do not *determine*, or *resolve* to come to me. He meant to refer to the state of the heart itself, rather than to any *purpose* or *determination* of the heart. However much the natural heart may desire to escape eternal sorrow, yet it has no desire to be holy. However much the carnal man may long to be delivered from eternal ruin, yet he has no desire for a holy God, nor for holy duty, and no relish for Christ and his way of salvation; and is in heart so disinclined to be under his dominion, to obey him, or to be under obligations to him, that of himself he does not come, nor really choose to come to Christ. "Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." For,

I. There is nothing in the circumstance of our descent from godly parents which disposes us to go to Christ.

II. There is nothing in our hearts previously to regeneration that will lead us to Christ.

III. The persuasions of others have no power to make us willing to come to Christ.

IV. All who come to Christ are brought thither by the power of God.

I. There is nothing in the circumstance of our descent from godly parents which disposes us to go to Christ.

Although we believe that by nature all men are depraved, yet we are exceedingly apt to suppose there may be something peculiar in our own case. It not unfrequently occurs, that some individuals look back on those who preceded them, and from the holiness of their ancestors infer, either that their own hearts are not as hard as those of other men, or that in consequence of something done by their ancestors, they shall in some mysterious way be brought to Christ. This seems to have been the opinion of the Jews respecting themselves. They knew that they were descendants of Abraham. In consequence of this they supposed themselves to be unlike others, and nearer to salvation than they. Whenever they were urged to consider their danger, they were ready to reply, "we are Abraham's seed." Hence they are cautioned, "say not we are Abraham's seed, for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up seed unto Abraham." The Jews of that generation as well as of all others, were externally his own people. "He came to his own, and his own received him not." But there were some who did receive him. There were some to whom he gave the power of becoming the sons of God. There were some who believed on him. And who were they? From what earthly ancestor did these sons of God descend? Though they were probably the *descendants of Abraham*, according to their natural generation, yet as *the sons of God* they were not born of the flesh. Their religion, unlike their blood, did not run in their veins. Though born of the family of Abraham, it did not follow that they were thus born of God. The

descendants of Abraham inherited from their ancestor a nature in no respect different from that which pertains to all other men. Nor is the nature of any descendant of Adam varied, in the least degree, by the godliness of his parents or any of his ancestors. The children of the depraved saints are not born holy. They are by nature children of wrath, even as others. Whatever is born of the flesh, is flesh. All mankind, then, are by nature alienated from God. The children of the godly as well as those of the ungodly, are born without any relish for Christ, and unwilling to come to him for salvation.

II. There is nothing in our hearts previously to regeneration which tends to Christ.

As men do not become the children of God in consequence of being descended from godly ancestors; as they are not born of blood, so also they are not born of the *will* of the flesh. There is nothing in the *volitions*, the *resolutions*, or the *purposes* of the natural heart, which will bring them to Christ. "They that are of the flesh do mind the things of the flesh." The operations and tendencies of the flesh are affectingly described by the apostle, Rom. vii. 5: "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." "The carnal mind is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; so then they that are in the flesh can not please God." If the depraved heart is so opposite to God, then it follows that all its acts will be opposite to his honour and the glory of his reign. Although it may "*will*" to escape perdition, yet it never chooses the way of escape—the "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." Though it may desire the inheritance where there is no tear, nor pain, nor death, yet it never chooses to be a Spiritual son of God. It has such a disrelish for the holy service of Christ, that though

to escape eternal ruin it will resolve and determine to perform it, yet never enters upon it. The man who is under its influence resolves to serve Christ and does it not. He *re-resolves*, and does it not; and if left to his own resolutions, dies the same. There is then nothing in our own hearts, previously to regeneration, which will bring us to Christ.

III. The persuasions of others have no power to make us willing to come to Christ.

An Apostle has said that the sons of God are not born of the will of man. This he declared in the same sentence in which he said, "they are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh." By "*not born*" of the will of man, he means that they are not made Christians by the power of man. No individual can, by his own will, make any other child of Adam to become a child of God. The power of the divine will is instantaneous and irresistible. Not so with us. The power of our own will extends only to our own members, and not to the members, much less to the hearts, of others. But if we extend the meaning of the phrase, and make it embrace, as it was probably intended to embrace, not merely the will, but the efforts of others, it is then true that no human being can transform another human being into the image of God. Can parents, by their own efforts, renew the hearts of their children? It is indeed true that parents can teach their children the commandments of the Lord. They can talk of them when they lie down, and when they rise up—when they sit in the house, and when they walk by the way. They can dedicate their children to God in baptism; they can pray with them alone, and in the family; they can bring them to the sanctuary, and there in company with the saints they can call on the Most High to save them. And what are all these supplications but an acknowledgment

of their own inability to convert them? Ministers may desire their conversion, but this does not convert them. They may set before them the law of God. In the name of the most high God they may command them, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." They may enforce this command by a consideration of the majesty and glory of Jehovah, by his right to command, by their obligation to obey, and by the mercies which he is continually pouring upon them; and yet, notwithstanding this command, and these persuasions, their unwillingness will remain.

They may speak of the character of Christ; they may tell of him who in the beginning was with God, and who was God; they may tell, so far as human language can tell, the condescension of him, who, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty may be rich; they may tell his privations when he was working out our salvation, and say, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man had not where to lay his head;" they may speak of the accumulated sufferings which he endured in our behalf, and tell of his being arrested and doomed to death; of his being crowned with thorns; of his being crucified; of his giving up the ghost; and of his being placed in the sepulchre. They may state all these wonderful things in the history of the Saviour, and particularly all his love and sufferings for our salvation; and in view of all these they may invite them to come, and yet the impenitent heart will see no form nor comeliness in Jesus that it should desire him. There will be no going forth of anxiety to receive him in his excellency and glory; no sense of the importance of his assistance, and no willingness to go to him for salvation.

The minister of Christ may proceed to add another

motive. He may next tell the impenitent man, of heaven and its glories. One would think there are enough in these to awaken his desires, and produce a willingness to come to Christ to obtain them. There are the mansions prepared for the saints. There are the walls of the New Jerusalem with all their splendors. There is the tree of life. There run the waters of the river of life. There no withering sun smites by day. There no tempest beats. There no tear falls, no sickness comes, no death enters. *There is the throne of the Lord God Almighty. There* is Jesus, the friend and redeemer of man. There are the holy angels. There are the saints. All these things may be brought to bear on the mind of the sinner, and yet under these mighty inducements he is not moved to go to "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world."

Here the man of God may present an additional argument. He may present the mischiefs of sin. He may tell the woes through which it will lead the transgressor, even in this life. He may say that the way of transgressors is hard. He may assure him that the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. He may speak of the terrors of dissolving mortality. He may allude to the horrors of going away a *guilty*, lonely spirit, into the presence of the holy God. He may refer to the scene of remanding the soul newly come into eternity to the world of wo. He may speak of the day in which all who have done evil shall come forth from their graves to shame and eternal contempt. He may speak of the descent of the Son, not as a Saviour but as a Judge. He may allude to the trembling throng upon the left hand. He may speak of their going away into everlasting punishment —to dwell in the world "where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched." And yet the sinner does

not come to Christ. This whole array of argument moves him not. However much the man of God may have desired, however anxiously he may have labored, however earnestly he may have entreated, the sinner is still at a distance from Christ. Truly the saints are not born into the kingdom of Christ, either by blood, or by the will of the flesh, or by the will of man. How deeply affecting then is their state! Oh how overwhelming their condition! A godly ancestry cannot secure their salvation. The will of their corrupt nature cannot secure it. The will of the saints around them cannot secure it. There is no created being in heaven or earth who can secure it, and yet to Christ they will not go. Though they desire freedom from wo, they do not go to him for it. They have no relish for Christ and his service, and though their Spiritual life here, and their eternal life depend on it, yet they will not go to him that they may have life.

Hence it follows, IV., that all who come to Christ are brought to him by the power of God.

This is affirmed in the passage to which we have so often alluded. Those who are the sons of God are born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The eyes of their understandings are opened that they may see the glory of God, the excellency of Christ, the baseness of rebellion against him, and the necessity of being renewed in the inner man. Their consciences are touched and awakened to a solemn performance of their duty. They are convinced. The power of the Almighty works within them, makes them new creatures, and excites them to go to Jesus that they may have life. Thus, *and thus only*, is this reluctance to go to Christ overcome, and justification unto life received. He who was unwilling

to receive Christ now relies on him for salvation, and rejoices in the hope of the glory of God.

1. From this subject it is evident, that the impenitent continually mistake the state of their own hearts.

If we except those cases in which the Holy Spirit is operating on their understandings and consciences, there is not an impenitent individual who does not believe that he loves God, confides in Christ, and is waiting with an earnest desire to be renewed by the Holy Ghost. It is indeed true, that not a very large portion of the impenitent believe themselves to be Christians, but it is hard to find an individual amongst them who does not believe that he is willing to go to Christ for salvation. Almost every one of them is found at times to wonder why he is not received by Christ, and why some earnest of eternal salvation is not conferred upon him. But according to the view which we have received of the instructions of Christ, all the individuals of this class mistake the true character of their hearts. Instead of laying the fault of their continued impenitence on the fact that they *do not* COME *to Christ*, the scriptures distinctly charge it on their want of *a will or heart* to come to him. Here, then, is the true seat of the difficulty. It is in the heart. The impenitent think themselves to be ready to do whatever Christ commands them. Like the ancient Israelites they say, "All that the Lord our God shall say unto us, we will do;" and as God said to those in ancient times, so he says to those of our generation, "O, that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them!" Here is the source of the evil; hence it flows forth, and has an influence on every exercise and act of their lives. Hence it is that they do not come to Christ, that they may have life.

2. The interference of God in his behalf is the only hope of a sinner.

If it be true, that sinners will not come to Christ—if there be no heart in them to come to him and receive salvation, what hope can they have that they will ever be saved? No relief can rise up in their own bosoms. They love their own ways; they do not desire to turn from them. In themselves no movement to turn will ever originate. How sorrowful is their condition! how calamitous is their state! A few more suns shall rise and set; a few more successions of joy and sorrow; a few more of the pleasures of sin; and the night of eternal darkness will roll over them, an eternal duration of wo will begin, and an endless succession of agonies will be introduced. Though they have every faculty of body and mind requisite to serve God and to secure their salvation, yet they have no heart to use them. Within themselves deliverance will never spring up. The impenitent around them cannot bring them relief. Their godly friends cannot give them new hearts. All around them is clothed in gloom. No being on the earth can rescue them.

But there is, my impenitent hearers, a possibility of your being finally saved from this fearful condition. There is one being who is able to bring you forth. The God to whom you are unwilling to go, may in mercy stretch forth his hand for your relief. Christ, to whom you are unwilling to come, may grant you faith and repentance unto life. The Holy Spirit may renew you in the image of God. This is the only hope. This is the only refuge from the tempest. God on high is more kind to you than you are to yourselves, and of his infinite mercy he may save you. O! how surprising is the grace which works that in the children of men, which they are unwilling to work in themselves; and yet this

grace is the only ground of hope that any one of you will ever be saved.

3. If the salvation of the impenitent is altogether in the hands of the Almighty, we cannot but see the duty of earnest and confiding prayer.

Though this work be altogether his own, yet he will be sought unto by his people to do it for them. God requires all men to seek his face. It is from him alone that salvation can come. The very fact of earnest and confiding prayer, is a confession that our own strength is incompetent to the task. It is a recognition of God, as the supreme ruler and sovereign disposer of all. With this recognition we must come and implore his mercy, if we would ever be saved, or ever see those saved by whom we are surrounded. Though there be no help in ourselves, we may then be able to say, God is our helper, our strength, our shield, and our portion. To him we must go for relief; on him alone we must rely; and then, through his abounding grace, we shall be brought home to Zion, with many of those who *now* will not come to Christ, that they may have life.

SERMON II.

THE CONSCIENCE AND REASON OF THE UNREGENERATE NO SAFE GUIDE TO SALVATION.

ROM. viii. 13.—"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

THE Apostle had just been speaking respecting the Christian conflict. He had told the Roman Christians what severe trials he had with the remains of his own personal corruptions. While he acknowledged the law to be spiritual, he declared himself to be carnal, sold under sin. "For what I do," he said, "for what I do, I allow not; for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I. If, then, I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law, that it is good. Now, then, it is no more I that doth it, but sin, that dwelleth in me. I find, then, a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members." "*The law of sin*," in the last section, means precisely the same thing as "*the law in my members*" in the first section. Whoever makes war upon another and is victorious, leads away the captive to be subject to his own control. Thus the law of sin is here represented as bringing the apostle into captivity to "the law of sin which was in his members." This law of sin is precisely what he means by the "*flesh*" in the text. Though it may sometimes gain the victory over a saint, yet if an individual continues to live according to its

dictates, he shall eventually perish. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." The terms flesh and body, in this instance, seem to have the same meaning.

The subject suggests the inquiry,

I. What is the meaning of the term "flesh," in the passage under consideration?

II. What is it to live after the flesh?

III. What is it to mortify the deeds of the flesh?

IV. In what way can the deeds of the flesh be mortified?

V. What are the consequences of neglecting to mortify the deeds of the flesh?

VI. What are the consequences of mortifying the deeds of the flesh?

I. What is the meaning of the term "flesh," in the passage under consideration?

There have been individuals who maintained that the spirit of man is in itself pure and holy. They declare that it is in no other respect corrupt or corruptible but by being joined to matter. The ancient Gnostics and Manichæans were the believers and patrons of this doctrine; and hence a modification of it has infected the church in various periods of the world. Hence probably arose the opinion, that the body must be dissolved, and all its particles cleansed by a kind of chemical process, for the kingdom of Heaven. But I humbly apprehend, that whatever else may be the reason for a dissolution of our bodies, and a remingling with the dust from which they were taken, it cannot be shown that this process is designed to cleanse them from the stains of sin. Our material members are not the source of sin. They are only instruments either of righteousness or iniquity, according to the state of the mind which controls them.

This is the uniform representation of the scriptures. And, besides, if the dissolution of the body, and its commixture with the earth from which it was taken, be a process of purifying the material frame from all iniquity, then it will follow that all whose bodies are thus decomposed, are purified and prepared to dwell in the regions of eternal holiness. But sin is an evil which cannot be expelled from the system by any such operation; nor so far as I know, is there any intimation in the scriptures that such an object is designed to be effected by the dissolution of our bodies. The term "flesh" is used in the passage under consideration, not to denote any thing of a material nature in us, but simply the *depravity of our heart, or "our carnal nature*:" "The seat of carnal appetites or desires; of sinful affections and passions." It is used to denote the carnal nature in us, which opposes the Holy Spirit, and rejects the rules of life which he has given. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live." That no doubt may remain respecting this interpretation, it is desirable to confirm it by corresponding passages. That the term "flesh" is used to denote whatever in our minds and hearts resists the Holy Spirit, and refuses to be subject to his law or control, is seen in the following places; Rom. viii. 4: "Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. viii. 5: "But they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." Rom. viii. 6: "For to be carnally" (fleshly) "minded, is death; but to be spiritually minded, is life and peace." Rom. viii. 7: "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. viii. 8: "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." This can in

no respect be applicable to our material frame, for many, while in this life, have had testimony that they pleased God. Nor can it for a moment be supposed, that "flesh" here is used to denote sinful exercises or acts, for no one can suppose that the apostle would gravely tell the Roman Christians, that no one while subject to sinful exercises and performing sinful acts can please God. No one can believe that he could soberly say, that sinful exercises and acts are enmity against God, that sinful exercises and acts are not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. The apostles were guilty of no such absurdities as some modern systems seem to imply. They never adopted the system of theology, which leaves man without a heart, and substitutes exercises and preferences in its stead. They believed that man, considered as a subject of law, has a heart, and as an impenitent man, that he has an evil heart—a corrupt heart—a carnal heart—and that from this heart proceeds "evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." The tendency of the natural heart to these and other sins, they called "the flesh." This characteristic of the natural man will exist altogether independently of the circumstances by which it is surrounded. Neither place, nor time, nor motives can eradicate it. This is the flesh, and this is what the apostle means by the term "flesh" in the passage under consideration.

II. What is it to live after the flesh?

It is to yield to the dictates of the natural heart, or to any of the rules of life which it may suggest. Here we may mention the effects which this internal depravity produces by an enlistment of the human passions in its service. While the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, and gentleness, the works of the flesh are declared by the apostle to be "adultery, fornication, uncleanness,

lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." * * * * Whilst, therefore, in wielding the human passions, our depravity produces these fearful crimes, it also gains a dominion over our reason, and perverts it from its proper exercise and use in the service of God. This assertion may indeed alarm many who have not diligently considered the subject. We think highly of our rational powers. We are wont almost to deify our reason. We are apt to elevate its decisions to a level with the oracles of the living God. But as a guide in religious duty, our understandings are quite as likely to err as our passions. The errors which reason has introduced into the systems of religion, and the sins which have been produced, are probably as numerous as those which are charged on the influence of the passions. When a corrupt heart turns man aside, it is not always done by the instrumentality of the passions. The reason is often subdued, and the understanding is made a tributary to its noxious influence. The apostle, in his Epistle to the Romans, describes some, who, though they knew God, did not glorify him as God, but became vain in their imaginations, (reasonings,) and their foolish heart (their perverted understanding,) was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. Indeed the reason of man, *the boasted reason of man*, is liable to be perverted by a corrupt heart. It is perverted just in proportion to the strength of our depravity; and hence it has been so blind in some as not to see that the scriptures are inspired—so blind in others as not to perceive that there is a God—and so blind in millions of the human race, as to mistake the idols of the heathen, the workmanship of human hands, for Jehovah, the maker

of the heavens and the earth. No other guide in duty is more unsafe than the reason of man.

Nor is conscience more safe than reason. This is a startling proposition to many, and perhaps to all. We are accustomed to think highly of our consciences. We are apt to suppose, that whatever they do not condemn must be right. We are wont to claim liberty to follow our consciences, and to worship God according to their dictates. When we do this, we think that we do right. We suppose that we have satisfied the claims of the Almighty, and we think that all around us ought to be satisfied. This view of the accuracy of conscience, as a guide in moral or spiritual subjects, is altogether erroneous. Conscience seems to be nothing else than the emotions of the soul in view of the moral aspect of any thing already done, or about to be done. If the transaction appears to be right, an emotion of approbation is felt; if wrong, an emotion of disapprobation is excited. This is generally true of all men. But who does not see, that even if this emotion be uniformly regular in view of what appears to be right or wrong, of which there is much reason to doubt, who does not see that our view of what is right and wrong, holy or sinful, may be exceedingly defective? Who does not know, that conscience in one class of character approves what is entirely condemned by the conscience of another class? Who does not know, that conscience approves that in one age which it condemns in another? Who is ignorant, that conscience in the same individual at one time approves what at another time it condemns? Who has not read, that Paul once "verily thought with himself, that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth?" But it may be demanded, what! have we *in ourselves* no standard of right and wrong? I confidently reply, no; for the scriptures are

the only rule respecting things to be believed and to be done. Are we still asked, is it possible that an action or a course of life may seem to us to be right and safe, and yet notwithstanding be wrong and ruinous? I answer, it is not only a possible but a very common occurrence; for the scripture saith, "There is a way, which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." The flesh has as powerful an influence over the consciences as over the reason of men. The corruption of nature has a mighty control over our views of our own actions, and as long as there is in us a single relic of our original depravity, so long can no reliance be justly placed on our consciences as guides in duty. God has never required us to look within ourselves for rules of life. His law is perfect. This is our only guide; and whoever relies on his reason or his conscience to direct him in the way wherein he should go, will find at last that his life has received its course from the dictates of the flesh. To live after the flesh, then, is to follow our passions, our reason, or our conscience as the guides of life. The Bible is a perfect rule of duty, for all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work. To obey the dictates of any other than the Almighty, as written in his oracles, is to reject the scriptures and to live according to the flesh. All those impulses and rules of duty which *arise within ourselves*, are, in a greater or less degree, infected with the flesh. What corrupt passion has not brought conscience under various circumstances to approve of its exercise? What erroneous opinion has not received its unqualified commendation? How often are all these found to be united in carrying on a warfare against God and his authority,

against Christ and the way of salvation, against the Holy Ghost and his operations. To obey the dictates of any thing but the word of God, is to sin against him. The words, "*to live*," *in the phrase* "TO LIVE *after the flesh*," are used to denote the general character of our feelings and actions. There is no man that liveth and sinneth not. But if it be the characteristic of our lives, that we allow and cherish sin, that we walk in ways of transgression, instead of occasionally falling into sin, then it is certain that we follow the dictates of our carnal propensities, that we resist the authority of the divine law, that we seek our own gratification rather than the glory of God, that we obey our own passions, reason, or conscience, rather than his will. THIS IS TO LIVE AFTER THE FLESH. To obey these as a rule, either of our feelings or our lives, is to subject ourselves to be led into every species of transgression.

III. What is it to mortify the deeds of the flesh?

The term "mortify" is here used in the literal and not in the figurative sense. We use this word in a figurative sense, to denote the production of shame in any individual. But though an individual be ashamed of his deeds, it is not certain that he will abandon them. But to mortify the deeds of the flesh denotes here, to forsake them, to arrest and stop them. As a dying individual ceases to perform any of those acts which are common to the healthful and the living world, so we are to cease from following the dictates of the flesh. These must cease to have dominion over us, and must not be suffered to guide us in respect to what we shall think respecting God, or duty, or eternity. It must not be suffered to guide our feelings towards God, or Christ, or the Holy Spirit, or towards those around us. It must not be suffered to control our actions, either in respect to God, ourselves, or our neighbor. No dictate of the

flesh is to be obeyed, but all its impulses, maxims, and habits are to be resisted, and all its temptations to be overcome. This is to mortify the deeds of the flesh.

But, IV. In what way can the deeds of the flesh be mortified?

This work is a vast one. No human power is adequate to its accomplishment. The deeds of the flesh cannot be mortified, while the flesh itself—the corruption of our nature—has its full sway over us. We may indeed abandon some open sins. We may cease to commit some flagrant offences; but the evil itself is deeply seated in us. If a stream be obstructed, the power of the fountain from which it proceeds is not thereby destroyed. It will continue to discharge its waters. It will seek out some other channel, and compel a passage, till it rushes forth without restraint. This channel is often found to be subterraneous, and therefore unseen. Now, however desirable to the peace of an earthly community, a reformation in public morals may be, and however earnestly on this account it is to be sought, yet it must not be forgotten, that nothing of this nature is alone available to our admission into the kingdom of God. It is not enough, that an external morality appear in us. It is not enough, that the deeds of the flesh are not openly and boldly done. The carnal nature itself must be reached. Our souls must be renewed in the image of him that created us, and hence, the apostle does not omit this important circumstance. He does not intimate that the deeds of the flesh can be mortified without aid from above, and therefore he says, "But if ye *through the Spirit* do mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live." Man alone is too feeble to accomplish this work. So controlling is the corruption of our nature, so powerful is the flesh, as to require for its subjugation the power of the Almighty. I know that the

idea of the immediate action of divine power on our hearts has been rejected by many in our generation. It is now common to speak of moral power, as competent to effect this work in us. But the scriptures refer its accomplishment to a very great and an immediate exercise of divine power. So great is this power, that the eyes of Christians need to be opened to perceive its extent; and hence, the apostle declares, that without ceasing he prayed for the Ephesians, that "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: *the eyes of your understanding being enlightened;* that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER to-us-ward, who believe, according to the working of his mighty power." And lest there should still linger even a doubt respecting the power employed in this work, he illustrates it by that which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand, "and put all things under his feet." However much we may flatter ourselves, that moral power is sufficient for our own renovation, and that persuasion, either by man or by the Holy Ghost, will effect it, it is still true that we need something more than suasion; and if we have nothing more, we shall perish. We need to be renewed by the exceeding greatness, not of persuasion, but of the *power* of the Almighty. The renovation of our corrupt nature requires an act of the most high God, like that which was put forth when he raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the grave. Nothing short of this will subdue our native corruption, and bring us into cordial obedience to the Almighty.

Our hearts need to be renewed by this power. The

obstinacy, which is denominated the flesh, must be thus subdued. The inner man needs to be wrought into a conformity to the divine image. This is a prerequisite to a mortification of the deeds of the flesh. And hence, God has said respecting his people: "I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them a heart of flesh, (which in this instance means a tender heart,) that they may walk in my statutes, and keep my ordinances and do them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; but as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord God." And not only do our hearts need this renovation as a prerequisite to obedience, but our understandings—on which we so much rely to guide us in our duty—must be assisted from above. At best, they are but blind guides in religion, and hence, if we give ourselves over to be conducted by them, we shall surely fall into error. The eyes of our understandings need to be opened that they may see. Perverted as they now are, by our depravity, they are totally incompetent to lead us in any way but that which the flesh shall dictate. And our consciences, whose authority we have been wont to place almost on a level with the word of God—even our consciences—need to be purified from that which leads to iniquity. The soul's opinion and judgment of its own actions often acquit men when they ought to be condemned. The scripture speaks of a "good conscience," which implies that there may be a bad one. It speaks of a "weak conscience." It speaks of a conscience "seared with a hot iron." It speaks of a "defiled conscience;" and it speaks also of "purging the conscience of dead works, to serve the living God." Our consciences, then, as well as our affections and reason, need to be purified, guided, and

brought into subjection to the authority of Jehovah; and what but his Spirit can effect it? Now, if by the operation of the Holy Ghost on our whole inner man, we are enabled to mortify the deeds of the flesh; if our carnal propensities are so subdued in us as not to lead us to do the deeds of the flesh, we have occasion to thank God and take courage, for he has begun a work of grace in our souls.

But care will be requisite not to overlook the fact, that in respect to all these things God requires us to be awake, and to seek him for the requisite help. As the corruption of our nature cannot be cured without the immediate and mighty operation of his power on our hearts, it is incumbent on us to inquire whether there be any way in which this influence can be secured. We are taught in the scriptures, to seek his face both for the pardon of our sins and the renovation of our hearts. I know there is a reluctance in some to teach the wicked to cry to God for mercy. But this reluctance is not warranted by the word of God. Even Simon the sorcerer, whom Peter perceived to be in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, he notwithstanding commanded to repent, and to pray God that the thought of his heart might be forgiven him; and Paul also affirms, *I will that men pray everywhere.* It is not to be supposed, that prayer brings the Almighty under any obligation to grant relief, any more than the application of a beggar at your doors lays you under an obligation to grant whatever he asks. Nor is it to be understood, that there is any merit in thus seeking the interposition of the Almighty. But this is the manner in which Jehovah has required us to seek his mercy, and no one, who desires to find it, can hesitate thus to seek it. Whoever feels his need of internal renovation, whoever desires to mortify the deeds of the flesh, must

cry to God as David cried, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Instead of supposing, that the eyes of his own understanding are capable of discerning his duty, he will go to the law and the testimony, and with a soul breaking for the longing it hath for divine knowledge, he will cry, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." "Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law, yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart!" After David had thus sought the Lord, he gratefully attributes his knowledge of spiritual things to the operation of the Most High, and says, "Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies." And he also declares the effect of this knowledge: "Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way." Instead of following the dictates of our reason, we are to subject this faculty entirely to the dictation of the scriptures, and employ it not in inventing rules of duty, but in reverently receiving what the Lord has taught. It must not be suffered to demur at a single truth which the Holy One has declared. We must understand, that here reason is not to be our teacher, but she herself is to be taught by the written word of the Almighty; and that instead of being a fellow laborer with God in the work of guiding men in the way of life, she is herself so blind, as to need assistance even to see the way which God has described in his

word, and so feeble, as to need strength at every step of our journey to the city of our God. This help is to be earnestly sought from above.

And in respect to our consciences, we are to understand, that their decisions are nothing but our own judgment concerning ourselves, and though their decisions are generally far more correct than our conduct, yet they will always partake of the defects of our knowledge, and be greatly modified by the remains of our carnal nature. So long as the understanding is imperfect, and the corruption of our nature is not wholly subdued, conscience is an unsafe guide. And we ought not, therefore, to rely on its decisions: but to pray, that it may be purified from dead works to serve the living God. We must pray that everything within it may be subdued; and, instead of elevating itself to be a rule of life, may become subject to the commands of God as recorded in his word. This is the only rule whereby we can glorify God and enjoy him. For this purpose the scriptures must be diligently studied, and the grace of God earnestly invoked.

V. What are the consequences of neglecting to mortify the deeds of the flesh?

They are a growth of corruption in ourselves. Our evil propensities will accumulate strength. Our reason will wander farther and farther from the truth, and become more confident in its errors. Our consciences will become more inaccurate in their decisions. And thus we, who are by nature children of wrath, shall, under the long-suffering of God, be fitting for destruction. The day of death will at length arrive. The messenger will come. Trembling will overtake us. We shall then long for an opportunity to mortify the flesh. But no such opportunity will be given. We shall be told, "The time is at hand. He that is unjust,

let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still." There will be, there can be no other relief, and we shall be compelled to go away, and to take up our abode with hypocrites and unbelievers.

But if through the Spirit we mortify the deeds of the flesh, then there will be in us a growing conformity to the image of Christ. We shall see more of his beauty and behold more of his glory. And while we gaze on his perfections, we shall be transformed into his image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. We shall glorify God with our bodies and with our spirits, which are his. Our communion with Jehovah will be sweet and cheering. Our views of eternity delightful. And when the angel of death shall be lingering on his journey, our aspiring spirits shall say, *come Lord Jesus, come quickly.* And when our tabernacles of clay shall be dissolved, we shall live in the presence of our Redeemer. We shall eat of the fruit of the tree, and drink of the water of the river of life. And there shall be no more death, and God shall wipe away every tear from our eyes.

SERMON III.

BLINDNESS OF THE UNDERSTANDING IN SPIRITUAL THINGS.

John i. 5.—"And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not."

The beloved disciple had introduced his gospel by a declaration of the original character of our Lord Jesus Christ. He had said, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." In these sentences, he ascribes to him all the knowledge and power of which we have any conception. The works from which we are accustomed to draw all our evidence of the existence, and power and knowledge of Jehovah, he here expressly attributed to Jesus Christ. And he not only declares the eternal power and godhead of the Messiah, but affirms, that "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." The Saviour was not only the ever-living God, but he had power to confer life upon others. This power is competent to produce natural as well as spiritual life. The species of life denoted by this passage, however, must be spiritual life. This is evident from the description of the manner in which it is produced. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." We are taught in other parts of the scriptures, that where there is no vision the people perish. Light, then, is ordinarily indsipensable to the salvation of men. One of the means by which the mediatorial kingdom is established in this world, is the instruction of men.

This instruction, however indispensable, is not to be regarded as the efficient cause of salvation. Whether given by Jehovah himself, as in the case of the Israelites at Mount Sinai; or by his prophets, as in the case of the nation of Israel in subsequent times; or by Christ, as in the case of the Jews; or by the preachers of the gospel; instruction alone has no power to renovate the heart and bring men into the kingdom of God. They who become new creatures are born of the Spirit. Neither has mere instruction, *communicated in any of these ways*, power to expel the spiritual ignorance from our minds, and to give us clear views of God, of Christ, of ourselves, or of the way of salvation. For the "LIGHT SHINETH IN DARKNESS, AND THE DARKNESS COMPREHENDED IT NOT." Instruction is given to our uninformed minds, and our uninformed minds comprehend it not.

The passage, then, teaches that our natural understandings do not comprehend the instructions of the scriptures.

This doctrine is a startling one to those who have thought highly of their natural faculties. Amongst these, there is no other one on which we so often congratulate ourselves, as our understandings. We are accustomed to think them adequate to all the exigencies of our condition. No other insinuation is so indignantly repelled by us, as that we are incompetent to grapple with almost any intellectual problem, which may need to be solved, in the concerns of our souls. So strong is this confidence in our own faculties of perception and reasoning, that it is exceedingly difficult to interrupt it; and were it not the declaration of the Almighty, that our natural understandings do not receive the instructions of God; were it merely my own doctrine, the result of a philosophical investigation, I should fear, that you would regard me as uttering a prodigious calumny

against the human understanding. But, as it is not the doctrine of man, but of Him who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins, it becomes all attentively to listen to it, and diligently to learn their condition. "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not."

Our darkened understandings do not comprehend the instructions of the scriptures.

It is undeniable, that every human being to whom the word of God has come, is competent to understand that there is a God. Men are able, in the exercise of their natural faculties, to ascertain from the scriptures that he is eternal, omnipotent, omnicient, and independent. But, whilst these things are thus easily understood, there are other perfections of which they can form no just conceptions. They read that he is holy, but they have no adequate idea of the nature of holiness. They read that he is just, but they have no appreciation of the justice of the Almighty. They read that he is merciful, but they see neither the nature of this attribute, nor any call for its exercise. Though they apprehend something of his natural attributes, yet it must be conceded, that they can form no adequate conceptions of his moral perfections. This will be readily conceded by all who have been born of God. They know that previously to their regeneration, they had no just appreciation of the glorious perfections of the Almighty. They confess that though they were not ignorant of his existence, they had no true sense of his glory. But whilst Christians generally acknowledge this truth, there may be some who, either through a wrong education, or through inattention to the operations of their own minds, or to the testimony of the scriptures, still believe themselves to be competent to understand the moral perfections of the Almighty. In

such cases, it is desirable to inquire of them, whether they are really able to do that, which the scriptures declare, that God performs in every instance where it is accomplished. Does not the single circumstance that God does any thing, or promises to do any thing for us—does not this circumstance prove, that of ourselves we are incompetent to do it? If we are not incompetent to do it, why should God do it for us? If he does not mean to have us understand that we are incompetent to do it, why does he promise to do it? And if we are indeed competent to do it, why should he do it at all? Now God, by his distinguishing grace, has brought all to the knowledge of his perfections who have ever had any just appreciation of them. The apostle declares, that "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And he also says, "Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." If any one is not satisfied with these testimonies, it is desirable to pray, in the language of Zophar, "O that God would speak, and open his lips against thee, and that he would show thee the secrets of wisdom." "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is high as heaven what canst thou do? Deeper than hell what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."

Nor is this applicable merely to the perfections of God. It is equally true of our knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Men by nature do not perceive his excellency and glory. Nothing short of divine power can

bring them to a just appreciation of his character. And hence, the prophet complained and said, "Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." So completely blind are men to the character of Christ, that the scriptures explicitly declare the understanding of it to be from God. Our Lord Jesus Christ had been many years in this world, and yet none understood his character, except those whose eyes had been opened to behold his divine excellency. This is seen to be true, by the different views which men had of him when he was on the earth. When he asked his disciples, "Whom do men say that I am?" they replied, "Some say, that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets." Jesus again asked them, "Whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God. And Jesus answered, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father, who is in heaven." While those by whom Christ was surrounded, had a conviction that he was a distinguished prophet, none but his immediate disciples appreciated his divine character. This appreciation was not a discovery which their own natural powers had made, but was wrought in them by the Holy Spirit; for the Saviour said, flesh and blood have not disclosed it to thee, but my Father, who is in heaven, has made thee to understand it. It would be easy to show by many other passages, that the natural understanding is blind to the excellency of Christ; but this fact is so generally conceded, as to prevent the necessity of further confirmation in this place.

The natural understanding does not learn the duty of man from the commands of God.

Though the duty of men to God, and to one another, is clearly defined and imperatively enjoined in the law of God, yet our reason does not comprehend it. It is indeed true, that the human understanding does learn from the law of God that he ought to be worshipped. But of the nature of this worship it forms no adequate conception. It is true, also, that it arrives at some general principles of duty towards man. In these respects even human reason rarely mistakes. Thus it is convinced, that God ought to be adored, and that men ought to abstain from murder, theft, false witness, and similar offences. And in all the considerations of the general principles of duty, it is found to understand and to appreciate the precepts of the divine law. But when it goes from general principles to their particular application, it is seen to be grossly blind in respect to the nature of the duties which are required of us. Though it readily acknowledges that God ought to be worshipped, and censures all hypocrisy in this service, yet it does not even perceive the nature of this worship, nor know what constitutes hypocrisy. It does not perceive that grave forms of worship are not all that he requires. Hence, many are content with the form, without the power of godliness. With the exception of those who have been convinced by the power of the Holy Ghost, not an individual can ordinarily be found, who does not believe that he loves God and fears him. Hence, through the blindness of the understanding, men fail to learn even their own deficiency in respect to love, humility, faith, or any of the graces of the Spirit. They do not seem to know what these exercises are. If they knew their nature, they would not suppose themselves to have them when they are desti-

tute of them. Thus it is evident, that even from the law of God, they do not learn the requisitions of the Almighty in respect to himself. Nor is this less true in respect to their duties to one another. Though commanded to honor father and mother, yet this is not ordinarily understood of that affectionate reverence which is acceptable to God. Though commanded not to kill, yet this is not understood to extend beyond the outward deed. It is not even suspected to include the angry feelings of the heart. And when commanded not to commit adultery, it is not supposed that this precept has reference to the state of the mind as well as to the deed, and that he who looketh on a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery in his heart. And when commanded not to steal, it is supposed that this precept merely requires us to abstain from taking the goods of a neighbor, but it is not thought to extend to that covetousness which exposes men to commit depredations on the property of others. The same thing is true of all the commands of the Almighty.

Nor is the understanding uniform in its perceptions. At one time it may decide that certain violations of the law are evil, and ought to be avoided. Thus, when remote from temptation, it uniformly decides that murder, adultery, theft, and false witness, are criminal and abominable. But let a strong passion be awakened in the mind, and even these general principles disappear. The understanding which lately pronounced murder, when viewed in its general aspect, to be a great evil, now sees it to be desirable and useful. The understanding which perceives theft, considered in general, to be a great and sore evil under the sun, now sees in its own case great advantages in it. The understanding which acknowledges falsehood, when viewed in the abstract, to be criminal, can now see such desirable results in

bearing false witness, as to be altogether blinded to its criminality. Thus, while in considering general sins, the mind is not apt to be blinded as to their nature, yet it is easily darkened in respect to its own particular transgressions. Now, though in the hour of trial the minds of men are thus darkened, though they are without understanding, yet they are inexcusable, because they have known the law of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death. In reference to this state of the understanding, the apostle asks, "Thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them that do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" It is then true, that not only those who are without the revealed law, are ignorant of their duties to God and to one another, but also those who have this law, fail to understand its spirituality or extent; and though their understandings may see and approve some of its general principles, yet they are blind in regard to a personal application of them to their own hearts and lives. "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." Do you hesitate in respect to the adoption of this view of your own understandings? Do you doubt whether they are so incompetent and faithless? I know, indeed, that the doctrine is humiliating. It tends to prostrate imaginations and every thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. But the grand question is, can this doctrine be true? Is the understanding of man so impotent in divine things? I answer, it was thus impotent in David. So deeply did he feel this impotence, that he cried aloud for help. And why did he thus cry, if there was no need of divine help? Does not the need of help from God, and the promise of help, and the gift of help—do not these imply an impotence in ourselves? Though David had the law of God in his hands and in his

memory, yet he felt himself to be in darkness. He felt that he was incompetent to see the way of life. Hence he prayed, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law;" "Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law;" "Give me understanding according to thy word." It is remarked by a distinguished divine, that he utters this prayer ten times in a single psalm. What, then, were his views of the incompetency of the human understanding to form just views of the Almighty, or of the way of life? If divine aid was so requisite to open the eyes of David, may we not infer that others also are in that darkness? Why should his mind alone be incompetent to perceive the glories of God and the way of salvation? Now, that which the prayers of David imply as true respecting himself, is true also of every unregenerate individual; and hence, Jehovah said of those to whom his word had come: "My people is foolish. They have not known me. They are sottish children, and they have no understanding. They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge." "Declare this in the house of Jacob, and publish it in the house of Judah, saying, Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding, which have eyes and see not, which have ears and hear not:" and not only does Jehovah declare the incompetency of our understandings, without the aid of divine grace, to guide us in the way of salvation, but explicitly prohibits a reliance on them. He enjoins on all his people, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding."

It may here be said, that this was the condition of men previously to the coming of Christ, but that he has brought such light into the world that all now see the way of life. And it is conceded, that our Lord came to be a light to mankind, as well as an atoning sacrifice.

That he was emphatically the light of the world, and the instructor of mankind, is evident, both by his precepts and his example, and yet the condition of the human family, in regard to receiving the things of the Spirit, is precisely the same as it was before his coming.

That mankind had much clearer instruction after the coming of Christ than before, is thankfully conceded. This is evident from the fact, that he thoroughly expounded the divine law, declared its spirituality, and reinstated it in its former splendor and glory. I would not here be understood, that the spirituality of the law was not known at the very time of its declaration on the mountain in the wilderness. Let it never be thought, that the law was given to be a mere rule of external actions. In its first declaration, it involved the service of the heart. How else could God have said to Moses, "O! that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me and keep all my commandments." In the progress of time, however, the original design of the law became obscured in the minds of men. While the law in its claims required precisely the same spiritual service, the views of the Jews concerning it were altered by the constantly accumulating traditions of the elders. Of these traditions our Lord divested it, and showed its various applications to the hearts and lives of men. He illustrated its leading principles, and restored it to its original dignity and splendor.

And not only did he divest the law of the traditions, which had for ages been accumulating upon it, and bring it forth in its original lustre, but in his own life, he illustrated all its principles. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled. If the world, for some generations before the coming of Christ, had erred and sinned, and had been lost for the want of knowing what holiness is, it is evident that this plea could no longer be made. Especially

must the men of that generation have had not only adequate instruction concerning the way of life, but an ocular illustration of it in the life of Jesus. All the generations of men since that period have had the history of Jesus. They have thus had opportunity and means of knowing the way of life. What but a moral impotency of the understanding can now prevent their acquiring it? Christ has come. He has familiarly told men what the Lord requires of them. He has assumed our nature, and in his own actions has given us an example of what we ought to be. What more can we ask? What other direction in the way of life can we demand? If we do not now understand the character and service of God, and the way of life, it is plain that our failure cannot be charged either on the want of rules, or example. If the same spiritual darkness reigns in us, it must be the result of some internal fault. It must be because the eyes of our understandings are closed, so that we do not see the light of the glorious gospel of the Son of God, and thus darkness reigns in our whole inner man. But the state of the natural man is represented in the New Testament under precisely the same forms and figures of language as in the Old, and the operation by which it is changed is described as precisely the same. Unregenerate men are described as "having their understanding darkened; as being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." And God is represented as giving to those that are reclaimed from this fearful state, a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. This is explained by the passage, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling." Paul says to the Collosians, that "We do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be

filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." And he also prayed for Timothy, "The Lord give thee understanding in all things."

Now, as men needed to have their eyes opened to see spiritual things, after the coming of Christ, equally as before, and as the same operation was requisite under both dispensations to bring them to the knowledge of the truth, it is evident that in spiritual things there is a deplorable blindness in the natural understandings of men. "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." Though the word of God is clearly written, and clearly preached—though the law of God is clearly declared, and also illustrated by the example of Christ—though the way of salvation is amply taught—yet the human mind is so involved in darkness as not to perceive the way wherein it should go. So deplorable is our condition! Now, in further confirmation of this mournful truth, it is necessary to add, that while the prophets and apostles deny the existence of spiritual understanding in men—while they say, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned"—they confirm this doctrine by a declaration of its correlative one, that the opening of the eyes of our understanding is the work of God. Now, if God must open them that we may see, it is certain that by nature they are closed. It is certain that they do not see the light that shines upon them.

As this blindness in the understanding is now proved to pertain to all generations of men, under every external manifestation of divine grace, and as the doctrine itself is so humbling to our nature, that we may be disposed to repel it, I shall attempt to justify it by quotations from the scriptures. Here it will be necessary to

remember, that there is spiritual darkness wherever God undertakes to give light, and spiritual blindness wherever he undertakes to give spiritual sight. Any other principle on this subject will bring the divine wisdom into reproach.

Those who fail of the grace of God are represented as blind, whatever external opportunities they may have had of knowing God and salvation. To the Israelites, who had heard the declaration of the law from Sinai, and seen all the deliverances of God, and yet had not cordially received him, Moses, in reference to their spiritual blindness and impenitence, says, "Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day." David, in the 36th Psalm, says to Jehovah, "For with thee is the fountain of life, and in thy light shall we see light." And in Jeremiah, xxiv. 7, God says, "I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord." And John the Baptist said, John iii. 27, "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven." He here referred to their rejection of his own testimony, that Jesus is the Christ, and declares, that though he had testified only what he had seen and heard, they did not receive his testimony. And Jesus himself said, John vi. 44, "No man can come unto me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him. It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God." These passages fully imply, that man is naturally blind in spiritual things—and they fully sustain the doctrine, that our natural understandings are *spiritually darkened.*

From the subject I infer, I. That we ought not to put a high degree of confidence in our own *opinions* on religious subjects.

There are some who seem to suppose, that their own opinions of the character of God, of Christ, and of the way

of salvation, are infallibly correct; that whatever is found to be the dictate of their own reason, or the judgment of their own consciences, is to be adopted without any hesitation respecting its truth; that whatever they can infer from some passages, (and those perhaps obscure,) is to be held, whatever plain and explicit declarations it may contravene. There are some who deem themselves to be as competent to form an opinion of the instructions of the scriptures, as the men of the most gifted minds and elevated piety. And when these opinions are once formed, they are held with the most untiring tenacity. They are inculcated with zeal. They are urged with earnestness. Now, if it be true, that there is a natural blindness in the understanding of every man by nature; if it be true, that clearness of spiritual vision depends altogether on the operations of the Spirit on the understanding, enabling it to comprehend those things which are spiritually discerned, then it is certain that we ought not to be very positive in any peculiar opinions, which we may form of religious truth. We ought to feel that we may err. We ought to suspect that we err. We ought not to adopt any thing as a fundamental truth, for which we have not a plain declaration of the scripture. We ought not to reject any truth, of which the word of God furnishes positive proof. Instead of having a confident spirit, we should be modest even in the view of men, humble in the sight of God, and always ready and even anxious to see more of the excellency of God, the glory of Christ, and the way of salvation. If we are really growing in divine knowledge, we shall also be growing in humility. This has been true of the saints, in all periods. "I have heard of thee," said Job, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

II. From the subject, I infer the need of a renovation of our spiritual sight. As it is evident that our mental eyes, by nature, are incompetent to discern spiritual things, it is essential to our salvation that they be opened by the power of the Almighty. As our spiritual sight is gone, it is necessary that it be restored. As our minds do not receive the blessed light of the law and of the gospel, it is desirable that each of us should seek a renovation of our understandings, that they may be able to discern the things of the Spirit.

III. The subject suggests the importance of prayer to God for the gift of spiritual sight. The light of heaven is shining all around us. The perfections of God are known and celebrated in the heavens. They are known, loved, and celebrated by the saints on the earth. The character of our Lord Jesus is understood in the world above. It is in some degree appreciated by the saints in this world, and every where it is admired and adored. From myriads of holy beings in heaven and on the earth, ascriptions of thanksgiving, and honor, and glory, and power, and dominion, ascend to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb. The work of the Holy Spirit is appreciated by all the redeemed in heaven, and by all the sanctified ones on the earth. The word of God is known to be a book of wonders; a light to our feet, and a lamp to our path; and the world prepared for the people of God is altogether glorious. And yet, surrounded by all these glorious things, we do not enjoy them. We cannot enjoy them. We are blind. The depravity of our nature has so closed our eyes, that we do not see them, nor understand our own miserable condition, nor our exposure to eternal sorrows; and yet no power of man, nor of angels can open our eyes, or remove our blindness. None but he, whom we have offended and provoked, can deliver us from this spiritual dark-

ness. Ought not each of us, then, earnestly to cry, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things" in thy character, thy law, and the gospel of thy Son.

IV. The subject teaches us, that in consequence of our blindness, we are in great danger of being forever lost.

The danger from natural blindness is very great, especially in those cases where the blind are accustomed to go forth continually without their guides, or any regard to the beaten ways in which men are wont to travel. But if the naturally blind are in danger, how much more they who are spiritually blind? The man who has lost his natural sight is aware of his danger, but he who has no spiritual sight, is ignorant of his exposures to ruin. The former is ordinarily careful, when he goes forth, to walk in the beaten track; the latter is regardless of the highway of holiness. The former, for the most part, confines himself to places with which he is acquainted; the latter goes forth without any knowledge of the way in which he is walking, or any desire to know it. The former is ordinarily content to remain in the vicinity of his dwelling and friends, but the latter is on a journey, and is pressed forward every moment. Regardless of the beaten track, without any just knowledge of the way, and urging himself onward in his travels, there is danger that he will be lost. There is extreme danger that he will never arrive at heaven. The way thither is the highway of holiness. On this he does not travel. He does not even find it. He wanders in darkness. He walks in the broad way. Without seeing the great gulf before him, he approaches it. His eyes are still closed; he does not see it. His ears are stopped; he does not hear the voice that warns him of too near an approach. He rushes on in darkness, and sinks to rise no more.

SERMON IV.

THE FAITHLESSNESS OF CONSCIENCE.

TITUS i. 15.—"But even their mind and conscience is defiled."

THERE is a very common opinion in this world, that the reason of the natural man is of itself adequate to comprehend the whole circle of his duties to God and to man, and minutely to understand them. So strong is this conviction, that it is exceedingly difficult to eradicate it, and to lead men to believe that the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But if, in any instance, conviction is fastened in the mind of an individual, that his natural understanding is incompetent to discern the things which pertain to the character of God, to that of Christ, and to the way of salvation, he then resorts to his conscience as his guide in his duties towards God and man. He clings to the opinion, that there is in his own bosom some adequate director in respect to his duty. And as he is forbidden to lean on his own understanding, he now sets forth, that conscience is an infallible judge of the course which he ought to take, both towards God and man; and when he has answered its demands, he is satisfied that his heart and life are right with God. Hence it occurs, that amongst men it is supposed to be an end of all disputation and moral crimination, if an individual truly declares that he has acted conscientiously. Almost every one seems to feel, that in his own case, it is sufficient carefully to obey the decisions of conscience. It

is very common to hear individuals say, that they worship God according to their own consciences; that they treat those around them according to the dictates of their own consciences, and that they do all things conscientiously. Although men may not uniformly obey the dictates of conscience, yet on the supposition that this obedience were uniform and perfect, it does not follow that their lives are holy. Conscience is as liable to err in its decisions as any other faculty of the mind. It is as seriously affected by the depravity of our nature as any other part of the inner man. Hence its acts are as liable to be erroneous as those of the understanding. THESE ACTS ARE DECISIONS RESPECTING THE MORAL QUALITIES OF OUR THOUGHTS, OUR FEELINGS, OR OUR DEEDS. They are decisions concerning the good or evil, the holiness or sinfulness, of whatever we think, feel, or do. These decisions are commonly, though perhaps, in most cases, imperceptibly, made in reference to some rule of duty. Thus, the heathen, who have no revealed law, are a law unto themselves. From the things that are made, they infer the existence of the maker. They infer his eternal power and godhead. They infer that he ought to be worshipped. From living in society with others, they infer that justice, truth, and several other things, are requisite to the comfort of society. Their perceptions on these subjects, indeed, are only general, and very obscure. But these obscure perceptions, and the duties which they suggest, are the law or rule of life to them; and according to these rules, their consciences bring forth decisions, and their thoughts accuse, or else excuse one another. But while the consciences of the heathen decide by no other rules than those which nature has suggested, it is not so with those who live under the influence of revelation. To them, the character of God, of Christ, and of the

Holy Ghost, the divine law, and all the claims of the gospel, are made known. In the scriptures there is a perfect code of laws for the government of the human family. By these the consciences of all men who hear the gospel, ought to judge and decide on the moral qualities of their feelings and lives. It is, however, a mournful fact, that even where the law of God is known, men are found to judge themselves, not by this unerring rule, but by the habits, the maxims, and the examples of others. In other cases, they judge by what seems to them to be reasonable, agreeable, or useful; and in some rare instances, they profess to receive, in every exigency, a special revelation concerning their duty. Now, as none of these is the true criterion by which conscience should decide on our lives, it follows that its decisions in these cases are not according to truth. They may, indeed, be such as to promote some valuable ends amongst men, but they have no reference to the glory of the Most High.

But even where conscience adopts the written word of God, as containing the principles according to which its decisions are to be made, it is not certain that its decisions will be just. Though the rule is perfect, the agent is imperfect. Though the law is complete, the judge is defective. Though the scripture so amply furnishes all the particulars requisite for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the conscience may be thoroughly furnished for its decisions, yet the eyes of the understanding may be so closed as not definitely to see them. And even where it does see them, conscience may be too corrupt to make an honest decision. Do you doubt whether conscience itself can be so perverted as to err in her decisions? Do you ask, where is the authority for such a declaration? The text

itself shall answer: "BUT EVEN THEIR MIND AND CONSCIENCE IS DEFILED."

The doctrine suggested by this passage, is, that the natural conscience, as well as the understanding, is so perverted, that confidence cannot be placed in its decisions.

This truth is evident,

1. From the fact, that the decisions of conscience can be correct in no other cases but those in which the understanding of divine truth is complete.

2. From the fact, that sinners are not always convinced of their sins.

3. From the fact, that it is necessary that the Holy Spirit should convince the world of sin, righteousness, and of judgment to come.

4. From the fact, that hypocrites have not always an affecting view of their hypocrisy.

5. From the fact, that Christians do not always understand their own sins.

6. From the fact, that there are no directions in the scriptures to follow the dictates of conscience.

7. From the fact, that the scriptures designate different consciences by different and opposite terms.

8. From the fact, that the way to death seems to man to be the right way, or the way to heaven.

That the conscience is so perverted in our present condition, that no confidence can be placed in its decisions, is evident, I. From the fact, that these decisions can be correct in no other cases but those in which divine truth is fully understood.

The word of God is the only rule which God has ever given to men, whereby they may know how to serve and glorify him. When their opinions, feelings, and actions agree with this rule, it is true that they honor him. But to produce this agreement, they must

first of all understand the rule which he has thus given them. If the rule is not understood, how can it be obeyed? If the mind be in darkness, how can it discern whether the conduct agrees with the command? If the eyes of the understanding are so closed, that it does not see the excellency of God, how can it decide whether the worship offered to him is compatible with his nature? If it does not discern things, how can it be capable of judging whether the homage presented to God is spiritual? If it does not see the glory of Christ, in what way can it decide whether he is worshipped compatibly with this glory? If it does not understand the spirituality of the law, how can it decide on the qualities of obedience? If it does not know its extent, how worthless would be its decision, that it had fully obeyed it? What confidence can we have in its decision on the agreement, or disagreement of our conduct with any rule of life, when the mind itself, which makes the decision, does not understand the rule by which the decision should be made? It makes no difference in the result, whether the rule relate to the fear, or the love, or the worship of God, or to faith in the Saviour, or to repentance of sin, or to the love of mankind, or to any other duty. If the mind does not understand the precept which requires the duty, it is incapable of deciding on the quality of any action which pertains to it. If it but partially understands the precept, it is but partially qualified to judge of the nature of actions which relate to it. Now, as the natural understanding is darkened by sin, as its eyes are closed through our natural depravity, how can it decide justly on the character of our thoughts, our feelings, or our actions? Or if it be admitted, which I most cordially concede, that it has some general but dim perceptions of truth and duty, how can its decisions be any thing else than general and

obscure? The decisions in this case must be like those of an unlearned foreigner, who, on his arrival in our country, should be created a Judge of the Supreme Court of these States, with no other knowledge of the law than could be inferred from certain general principles of justice, and, excepting a few words, with no knowledge of the language in which it is written, or the causes detailed, or the witnesses examined, or the arguments made, or the verdict given. How could he expound the law, and apply it to the case? How could he decide on the nature of the crime, and declare the appropriate sentence? And how can the mind, which on the one hand understands but obscurely the claims of God, as expressed in his word, and, independently of these, can scarcely know any thing of what constitutes sin, and has no adequate means of arriving at a knowledge of its nature, or desert, how can such a mind make any just decision respecting it? The blindness of his understanding affects the decisions of his conscience, and renders them either partial, or perverse.

II. That the decisions of conscience are not always in accordance with the truth, is evident from the fact, that sinners are not always convinced of sin.

That there is a condition in which an individual may be said to be convinced of sin, no Christian will deny. It is a condition of which he has had experience. He remembers the time when his eyes were so far open as to discern more of the nature of God, of the claims of his law, of his own obligations, and of the guilt of withholding his affection from him, than he had been wont to see. He remembers that his conscience then pronounced him to be vile, guilty, and abominable in the sight of the holy one of Israel. Nor are these things confined to the children of God. There is scarcely an impenitent individual who has not, at some times, been

made to see more than at others, of the claims of God, and of the divine conceptions of his conduct. There are times when conscience awakes, and with a voice more terrific than seven thunders, condemns the whole course of his life. At other times, it does not seem to find any thing to condemn, or, at the most, only some general faults, which it is quite willing to palliate, if not to tolerate. This was true of Paul: "I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died; and the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me; wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was, then, that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good, that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." Here, then, are two distinct states, described by the apostle. At one time he "was alive," without the law. He supposed himself to be doing the will of God. But again he found "sin working death" in him. Now, if the decisions of his conscience had all along been correct, he would uniformly have felt himself to be a sinner. He would continually have known, that sin was working his eternal destruction. And what is true of Paul in this instance, would now be true of every individual. Every human being would constantly feel himself to be a sinner. He would deeply feel it. It is *true* that he *is* a sinner. It is true, that his sins are *great*, and their consequences *fearful*. And if the decisions of conscience were always according to truth, it would at all times loudly and fearfully condemn him, and his soul would be overwhelmed by a sense of his guilt, and he would be crying for salvation, or yielding to despair. That these effects are not con-

tinually produced, is ample testimony of the faithlessness of conscience.

III. This position is also sustained by the fact, that the agency of the Holy Spirit is requisite to convince the world of sin.

That all mankind are sinners, will not be disputed. If their consciences were faithful, they would all be convinced of sin. Whether the sin be understood to relate to the divine law, or, as in the passage now referred to, it pertains only to a rejection of Christ, the conclusion must, in these and all other cases, be the same. If the consciences of men were always correct in their decisions, men would always be convinced of sin. There would be no need of this part of the work of the Holy Ghost. But the single circumstance, that the Holy Spirit is sent into the world to convince men of sin, is proof that the decisions of their consciences are either defective or altogether erroneous. Why, if they were already convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, why should the Holy Spirit make this a part, and a very important part, of his work in this world? Why should he come to do that which is already done? On no reasonable ground can this part of his office be shown to be necessary, if the decisions of conscience are according to truth.

IV. The faithlessness of conscience is apparent in the fact, that hypocrites have not always an appalling sense of their hypocrisy.

That there have been hypocrites in the church at all times, cannot be denied by any who diligently consider the scriptures. Though it is probable, that under the convincing power of the Holy Ghost, they sometimes understand their own hypocrisy, yet it is certain, that for the most part they deceive themselves as well as others. Though in his description of the Pharisees,

our Saviour represents them as performing many things to be seen of men, yet he never intimates that these unhappy men were always conscious of the unsoundness of their religious professions, and the sinfulness of their apparent devotions. Instead of this, he describes them as "blind." They were, indeed, blind to the character of God, of Christ, of the Holy Ghost—blind to the claims of the law, and the demands of the gospel. Had their consciences been correct in their decisions, the hypocrisy in their hearts and lives would have stood forth in all its appalling forms before their eyes. Their criminality would have stared them in the face: and instead of thanking God that they were not as wicked as other men, each of them would have been mourning over his own transgressions, and crying for mercy. If the decisions of conscience were always according to truth, sinners in Zion would be always afraid. Fearfulness would always occupy the bosoms of hypocrites, and they would always be inquiring, "Who of us shall dwell with devouring fire? Who of us shall inhabit everlasting burnings?" The fact, that they are not thus convinced of their hypocrisy, nor alarmed with anticipations of their future woes, is proof of the faithlessness of conscience.

V. This view of the subject is strengthened by the fact, that even Christians do not always detect their own sins.

That no one of the children of men has been perfect in this life, is amply taught in the word of God. But it often occurs, that they do not perceive their sins. Let me not here be understood to say, that they do not perceive the actions, feelings, and thoughts which are sinful in the sight of God. All these are seen by them as distinctly as any other thoughts, feelings, or actions; but the sinfulness of them is not perceived. They are

guilty of many things which they do not perceive to be transgressions. If the decisions of conscience were unerring, these things would be immediately declared to be sinful; they would be openly rebuked, and loudly condemned. Conscience would completely discriminate between the good and the evil, the holy and the vile. But it is an affecting fact, that our conduct may be exceedingly sinful in the sight of God, while its sinfulness is entirely unseen by ourselves. This faithlessness of conscience has been recognised by the devout of all ages. Hence, David asked, "Who can understand his errors?" Hence, he prayed, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults." "Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any evil way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." If conscience had been competent to detect and condemn his sins, why does he despairingly inquire, "who can understand his errors?" If the eyes of conscience are sufficiently discerning to detect every iniquity in him, why does he imploringly call on God to search him, to try him, to know his thoughts, and to see if there be any evil way in him? And not only is this faithlessness of conscience recognised in the prayers of the saints, but the scriptures abound with affecting instances in which the consciences of devout men have not detected their transgressions. When Moses and Aaron were sent to smite the rock, that water might flow forth for the Israelites, they transgressed against the Lord, and yet they seem not to have detected their sin till the Lord reproved them. Uzzah, moved by a desire to preserve the ark from falling, stretched forth his hand to steady it, but seems not to have been conscious of the transgression for which he was smitten, and gave up the ghost. The disciples of Christ, offended by the conduct of the Samaritans towards him, said,

"Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them as Elias did? But he turned and rebuked them, and said, ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." In these instances, conscience seems to have been utterly incompetent to detect the sin, or utterly faithless in exposing it and remonstrating against it. The fact, that Christians do not always perceive the sinfulness of their own acts, is proof of inaccuracy in the decisions of conscience.

This doctrine is evident, VI. From the fact, that there is no command in the scriptures to follow the dictates of conscience.

The scriptures are an infallible guide, both in respect to truth and duty. Hence, we are commanded to receive them, to believe them, and obey whatever they prescribe. The injunctions on this subject are exceedingly numerous and pressing. Now, if God had intended to set within us another guide to duty, if he had made conscience to be an infallible leader in all these matters, he would undoubtedly have informed us accordingly, and explicitly told us, that conscience is "a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path." He would have told us, that conscience "is true, and every one of its judgments endureth forever." He would have said, "He that heareth the decisions of conscience, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand." These terms and phrases are applied to the infallible word of God; and if conscience, too, would be infallible, the same expressions would be used in regard to it. But the scriptures never command us to follow its dictates, nor have those who believed the scriptures ever been willing to obey them. Had its dictates ever been regarded as infallible by the men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; had the scriptures been written only as co-or-

dinate with conscience—we should find the same charges in respect to the decisions of conscience as are now found in respect to the word of God. Instead of reading always, "*Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently*," we should sometimes find, "Thou hast commanded us to obey the dictates of conscience diligently." Instead of finding it written, that a young man shall cleanse his way, "*by taking heed thereto according to thy word*," it would be read, "by taking heed thereto according to conscience." Instead of the prayer, "*O, let me not wander from thy commandments*," it would be, "O, let me not wander from conscience." Instead of saying, "*I have stuck unto thy testimonies*," it would be, "I have stuck unto conscience." Instead of, "*Order my footsteps by thy word*," it would be, "Order my footsteps by conscience." Instead of being always written, "*The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting*," it would be sometimes found recorded, "The righteousness of conscience is everlasting." Were conscience a supreme arbiter of moral actions, and an infallible judge, it could not fail to be thus celebrated in the scriptures. But no such commendations of it are found in the word of God, nor are Christians required to follow its dictates. This fact shows, beyond disputation, that its decisions are not infallible.

And while there is no direction to follow the dictates of conscience, it is true, VII. That the scriptures designate different consciences, and perhaps different states of the same conscience, by different and directly opposite terms.

This is apparent to every attentive reader of the scriptures. Paul, indeed, in Acts xxiii. 1, said, "I have lived in all good conscience unto this day." By good conscience he here means, that his conscience had at all times approved of his course. But lest, from the terms

"good conscience," you should understand that he meant, in this instance, that his conscience had always been correct, it is necessary to say, that Paul always acted *conscientiously*. As a Christian, he had the testimony of his conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity he had his conversation in this world. He declares, that when an enemy of Christ, a hater of Christianity, "I verily thought, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which things I also did in Jerusalem; and many of the saints did I shut up in prison; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." In all these things, Paul acted with an approving conscience, for he lived in all good conscience, and verily thought he ought to do many things against Christ and his disciples. Here, then, it is plain, that his conscience approved two courses of conduct, which are directly and morally opposite to each other. The term "good," in this instance, cannot mean, then, that his conscience acted uprightly, but only that he acted according to its dictates, both when he was doing right and when he was doing wrong. He declares, also, that he labored to have a "conscience void of offence," that is, conscientiously to avoid giving offence. Though these go far to sustain the general doctrine of the irregularity of conscience in her decisions, yet in many other instances, the qualities of conscience are positively denoted by words. Thus, the scriptures speak of a "*good conscience*," in connexion with charity and faith, and of a "pure conscience." In these cases, the apostle unquestionably uses the terms "good" and "pure," as they are always used in reference to whatever pertains to the renovated yet imper-

fect saints in this world. According to the usage of the terms in application to men, they denote that comparative goodness and purity which are found in all the regenerate, and not the absolute perfection which pertains only to the consciences of angels and saints made perfect in glory. But while he admits the comparative purity of some consciences, he declares others to be "weak," or to be "defiled," or to be "evil," or to be "seared." And he also speaks of purging the conscience from dead works to serve the living God, and of hearts sprinkled from an "evil conscience," as well as "bodies washed with pure water." Now, these various descriptions of conscience conflict with the idea, that all its decisions are according to truth; and they incontestibly prove, that no confidence should be placed in it, as a guide to duty.

VIII. This view of the subject is confirmed by the fact, that the way to ruin seems to be the way of peace and eternal life.

This is a very common and perhaps a general trait of the human family. The light that is in them by nature is darkness. They discern not the way in which they should go. If, indeed, they have some dim view of the highway of holiness, it is still true they understand neither its general direction, nor the region through which it goes, nor the heavenly city to which it leads. To them, it seems to go through a country barren and dismal, and to terminate in eternal restrictions and intolerable melancholy. Thus, the way of peace and salvation is rejected. The way in which all the ungodly go, is agreeable to their taste, and inviting to all the corrupt propensities of their souls; and because it is agreeable to their appetites and desires, and darkened understandings, it seems to be the right way. Though they be told, that it is the way of death, yet it is hard, it is

impossible to make them practically and constantly believe it. They feel that the way which is so agreeable to their propensities, so gratifying to their nature, must be right. "The way of a fool," which in this instance means a transgressor, "the way of a transgressor is right in his own eyes." Though he sometimes apprehends that evil consequences may result from his course, yet in all the circumstances by which he is surrounded, and in the times in which he lives, he believes it to be right. Not only are his appetites and his passions satisfied with his course, but his darkened understanding believes it to be rational, and his "defiled conscience" decides that it is right. Do you doubt this assertion? Do you hesitate to receive this saying? I know it is not accordant with our own views of the decisions of our consciences. I know it is an appalling fact. But it is fully sustained by the scriptures. The word of God declares, "There is a way which seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." So fearful is our condition, that our consciences may decide our way to be right, when we are going down to the gates of death.

From this subject I infer, I. That God has placed no rule of duty within ourselves.

Our reason was never designed to be our guide in spiritual things. Its only office is to understand the things which God has revealed in his word, and in all cases reverently to bow to his authority. So long as its eyes are not opened by the power of the Holy Spirit, the understanding is in deplorable darkness. And even if it were capable of discerning all the principles of duty, its office is to gather them from the word of God. It has no right to form rules for the guidance of man in his religious duty. Nor are the decisions of the natural conscience, or the moral, or spiritual qualities of our

actions, in any respect more accurate than our understandings. Not only are our passions and appetites so affected by the fall, as to be irregular and tumultuous, but our understanding is darkened, and our consciences are corrupted. There is nothing within us to which we can look for guidance in the way to heaven. All there is darkness, error, and confusion. How fearful to confide in our reason! How dangerous to trust to the decisions of our consciences! How absolutely indispensable is the Spirit of God, to open the eyes of our understandings, and to purify our consciences from dead works!

II. The subject teaches us, that to live conscientiously is not in all cases to live godly.

Conscience in its decisions has respect to some principles of life. These principles may be the fruit of our own reason. In this case, the decision will approach no nearer to truth than the principles are, according to which the decision is made. Or it may decide according to the maxims of duty which it has learned from others. In this instance, as in the former, its decisions can claim no higher authority or greater correctness, than the maxims according to which they are made. Or, if even the scriptures be the rule according to which the decisions are made, then it will follow, that the decisions themselves must be affected by the blindness of the understanding, and by the weakness of conscience itself. And hence, to live conscientiously, may vary widely from living according to the commands of God. Were the understanding free from all spiritual blindness, and the conscience pure from all the influence of depravity, then to live conscientiously would be to live godly. But so long as the reason and conscience are defiled, we cannot be assured that the decisions of the latter will be according to truth. It is indeed possible,

for men to act conscientiously, and at the same time very wickedly. Paul verily thought, that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. It is possible to feel under strong obligations to do those things which are highly provoking to God, and injurious to man, which are flagrantly sinful and abominable. It is impossible to name a single sin, which has not been committed with all the sanctions of conscience.

III. The subject teaches what estimate to set on professions of acting conscientiously. Unless we have reason to doubt the veracity of one who makes the profession, his declaration ought to be received. A vastly greater portion of the world act conscientiously than we are apt to suppose. But this is very different from acting righteously and living godly. Because an individual follows his conscience, he is not, therefore, to be regarded either as just in the sight of men, or holy in the view of God. For conscience itself is an imperfect guide. In its natural state, its decisions are often very far from agreement with the truth, and whoever follows them, will be equally far from doing his duty. To say, then, that we follow conscience, is only to profess that we follow an incompetent and erring guide. And how can our lives be right under its guidance?

IV. The subject suggests the importance of praying for the purification of our consciences. As none but God can open the eyes of the understanding to perceive our duty, so none but He can quicken the conscience, and cause it to decide righteously on our thoughts, our feelings, our words, and our actions. To him, therefore, it is important to go in earnest prayer, that he would purify our consciences from dead works to serve the living God.

V. The subject suggests, that our condition is very deplorable. We are exceedingly inclined to rely on our understandings to discover the way of life, and on the testimony of our consciences that we are walking in it. But not only are our natural understandings too blind to discover it, but our consciences are exceedingly apt falsely to decide that we are walking in it, even while we are wandering in darkness. Thus we are liable to think we are something when we are nothing. The way which we take may seem right unto us, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Thus conflicting in the decisions of our consciences, we are liable to go on without apprehension of danger. Thus unexpectedly we shall arrive at the end of the way. There, when too late, we may meet the doom of which conscience had not admonished us, and begin the groans, and struggles, and pangs, whose duration shall be eternal!

SERMON V.

THE HEART DEPRAVED.

DEUT. v. 29.—"O, that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always."

THE circumstances in which this passage was uttered are exceedingly remarkable. The children of Israel had been held, during many generations, in cruel servitude to the Egyptians. By the mighty power of God they had been delivered from the hand of Pharaoh. They had seen his judgments on this proud and rebellious king, and on his land. They had seen the waters of the Red Sea, which had been divided for their own passage, suddenly return to their place and overwhelm the Egyptians in the mighty deep. Soon afterwards, on their journey to Canaan, they came to the wilderness of Sinai. There they were commanded to purify themselves, and to be ready against the third day. "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders, and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the Mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the nether part of the Mount, and Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended up as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole Mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice." In these majestic circumstances, the law

of the Lord was uttered in their hearing. The ten commandments were here distinctly proclaimed. In giving an account of this scene, near the close of his life, Moses said to the Israelites, "And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, for the mountain did burn with fire, that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes and your elders. And ye said, behold the Lord our God hath showed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire. We have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. Now, therefore, why should we die?" "Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; AND WE WILL HEAR IT, AND DO IT. * * * And the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken unto thee. They have well said all that they have spoken. *O, that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them.*"

In this case, it is evident that the Israelites had solemnly purposed to obey the commands of God. They had resolved to do all that he should require of them. They had said to Moses, "Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and WE WILL HEAR IT, AND DO IT." No indication can be given of a firmer purpose. Nor were they who uttered this resolution few in number. A whole nation stood before God, and they professed their resolution to be his people, and to do his will. Nor was this resolution adopted in a thoughtless manner. The circumstances of the case, utterly forbid the suspicion of levity in the transaction. No other resolution in the bosom of mor-

tals, bears evidence of being more sincerely or solemnly adopted. It was adopted amidst the sensible and terrific tokens of the presence of Jehovah. These words, said Moses, the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the Mount, out of the midst of the fire of the cloud, and of thick darkness, with a great voice, and while the mountain was burning with fire. Resolutions adopted in such circumstances, must be permanently operative, if any resolutions formed in impenitence can be thus operative. They were connected with facts which were calculated to keep them permanently in the memory, to imprint them on the mind, and to give them a peculiar impressiveness. If such resolutions were ever capable of controlling the heart, and of bringing it into subjection to the laws of the Almighty, we should suppose, that these would undoubtedly have effected it. They were indeed solemn. They were made in the most favorable circumstances. Had they been as powerful over men as they are often represented to be in our times, we should suppose that they would have been acceptable to the holy one of Israel. But when Moses told him their determination to hear and to do all the things which he should command, he replied, they have well said all that they have spoken unto thee. "O, that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always."

In this answer the Lord manifestly implied, that these resolutions would not be observed; that under the influence of their hearts, they would soon be swept away; that although it was well to resolve, yet their resolutions would not be operative over their corrupt hearts, but their corrupt hearts would break through their resolutions, and the depravity within them would continue to flow on in its accustomed channels. And what God here intimated to Moses, was soon realized.

After forty days, the individuals who had thus professed their resolution to hear and to do all that the Lord should command them, were found to have rejected Jehovah himself as their God, and to have made a golden calf, and to have proclaimed before it, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." These things unquestionably show, THAT THE NATURAL HEART IS SO DEPRAVED, AS TO RESIST AND TO BANISH ALL RESOLUTIONS TO OBEY THE COMMANDS OF THE MOST HIGH.

This leads us to show, I. What is meant by the term heart, as used in this passage and those which correspond with it.

II. To show the character of the natural heart.

III. To show its influence over the whole man.

I. What is meant by the term "heart," as used in this passage and those which correspond with it?

In common language, the word heart is used to denote the state of the feelings and passions in the mind, and the term *will* is used to denote its resolutions and purposes to do any thing, or to abstain from doing it. But this distinction in the meaning of these terms is not sustained by all good writers, either in the philosophy of mind, or in theology. For the purpose of facilitating their own understanding of the subject, as well as of communicating it to others, they often use the words "heart" and "will" to denote the same faculty of the mind. By faculties of the mind, we do not mean that the mind itself is divided into as many different departments as would seem to be denoted by the use of such terms as "faculties," "capacities," and others of a like nature. The same mind has a great variety of acts. When it acts in one manner, we call the mind thus acting, reason; when it acts in another manner, we call it conscience. In view of its constant production of

feelings and emotions, we call it the heart, or will. Thus, the same mind receives at different times, different names, according to the different acts which it performs. But it is exceedingly difficult, and perhaps impossible, to speak intelligibly concerning the mind, without using these names, and seeming almost to speak of them as if they were distinct individuals. Thus, when we speak of the heart, there is danger that we shall conceive of it as something distinct and separate from the mind itself, whereas it is nothing but the mind itself, in respect to its constant exercise of feelings towards different objects, and sometimes willing and determining to do, or not to do a thing, according to the inducements set before it. Whether these inducements can move the mind, in any given instance, to do or not to do any thing proposed to it, depends altogether upon its desirableness, in the view of the mind. The will is always as the greatest apparent good is. Thus, the greatest good, in the view of a depraved mind, is always found in a course of sin. Owing to this state of the mind, nothing else but sin can appear supremely good and desirable. Thus, also, a holy mind can see nothing desirable in sin; and nothing but holiness appears to it to be desirable and good. Thus, the term "heart" is used to denote the mind, in respect to its capacity to exercise feelings towards God, his law, his government. The feelings of a holy being will always be, love to God, obedience to his law, and a sweet acquiescence in his government. The feelings of an unholy being will always be, enmity to God, apathy, or opposition to his law, and rebellion against his government.

Now, in addition to this view of the case, there is another which is still more important. The exercises of the heart are of two classes. The *first* relates merely to the *feelings*; the *second*, to the *volitions*, or

determinations of the mind to do any thing, or not to do it. Feelings often exist in the mind, as love, hatred, and others of the same nature; so long as these feelings do not move the mind to do any thing, or to abstain from doing any thing, they are called "*immanent*," to denote that they *remain* within us, and do not move us to produce effects on any thing around us. Our emotions, desires, and affections are generally of this class, and may very properly be called by the general name of feelings. But when these feelings become so strong as to move us to determine on any action, then, these determinations are called volitions. It will be seen, that the volitions of the mind are only the effect and expression of the affections. Hence, it will also be seen, that the volitions of the mind do not produce the feelings, or affections, but are produced by the heart itself. Thus, the heart of man puts forth first, affections, and secondly, volitions, or determinations immediately to do, or not to do a thing. And the volitions entirely correspond with the feelings. This distinction seems to be suggested by the text itself. Now, if the hearts of men are depraved, it will follow, that all their determinations, or volitions immediately to do, or not to do a thing, are under the influence of our depravity, whatever other resolutions with respect to obedience, in some remote period, we may form.

1. What, then, is the character of the natural heart? This is answered by the word of God. All the acts of the natural heart are declared to be sinful. Whatever of evil exists in an individual of the human family, is charged ultimately on his heart. All evil, in thought, word, or deed, is described as having its origin here. Hence, the iniquity of the inhabitants of the old world is traced back to their hearts; for "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that

every imagination of the thoughts of *his heart* was *only evil* continually." And afterwards, when he brought forth Noah and his sons from the ark, he said, "I will not curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of *man's heart* is evil from his youth." David also confessed, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." And the Lord, by Jeremiah, after describing the calamity which should befall the inhabitants of Jerusalem, declared it to be, "Because they have forsaken my law, * * * and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein, but have walked after the imagination of *their own heart*." And again, Jehovah calls them, "This evil people, which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the imagination of *their heart*." The carnal mind is declared by the apostle to be "enmity against God, for it is not subject to his law, neither, indeed, can be." And Christ said, "For from within, out of *the heart* of man proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evil things come from *within*, and defile the man." Now, as the desires and appetites from which all these transgressions flow, are found in the human heart, who will undertake to say that it is not depraved?

2. This doctrine is confirmed by the fact, that God has promised to renew the hearts of his people.

Were it true, that all these and many other representations of the depravity of the heart were found in the scriptures; and were it also true, that the heart, without any corresponding remedy, is soon found to be obedient and holy, we should begin to doubt whether these descriptions are not figurative or hyperbolical. But if we find, that all the descriptions of a renovation of the heart, are exactly such as are requisite to repair

this ruin; and if the power employed in this renovation is such as seems to be demanded to effect the change, then we may safely conclude, that our view of the depravity of man has not been extravagant. If human persuasion is not adequate to turn the heart, if human power is altogether insufficient to effect this renovation, then the evil of the heart is immense. If divine energy is requisite to turn the hearts of men, and to renew them in righteousness, then their depravity is truly alarming. Now, that it is beyond the power of men to eradicate this depravity, must be evident from the fact, that God himself has promised to renew the hearts of his people; and, therefore, he said, "I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever. * * * And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me." And in Ezekiel xi. 19, he says, "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you, and I will take the *stony heart* out of their flesh, and will give them an *heart of flesh*, that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, to do them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God." And in Chap. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27, he says, "Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh; and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." Such, then, is the depravity of the human heart, that a total renovation is requisite to our walking in the statutes of

the Lord; and this renovation can be effected only by the power of the Almighty.

3. This view of the character of the heart is confirmed by the prayers recorded in the scriptures, for the renovation of the heart.

If the heart were so free from depravity as not to need renovation, by the direct and immediate power of God, it would not only be useless, but even censurable to ask him to renew it. On no other ground can this ancient and scriptural practice of praying for a new heart, be defended, except that of the necessity of divine interposition. This necessity is solely the consequence of our depravity. That such prayers, though of various forms, occur in the scriptures, no one tolerably acquainted with them will doubt. Thus, Ephraim is described, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19, "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus: Thou hast chastised me; and I was chastised as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned*, for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh. I was ashamed, yea, even confounded." In 1 Kings viii. 57, 58, Solomon prayed, "The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers; let him not leave us, nor forsake us; that he may incline *our hearts* unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments." And David, Psalms cxix. 36, prays, "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness." And in li. 10, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." These, and innumerable other places, evince the necessity of a divine operation, to renovate the hearts of the children of men. And if this operation be necessary, then it follows, that their

hearts are depraved beyond the power of human skill and energy to reclaim.

4. This view of the character of the heart is sustained by the representations which the scriptures make of its renovation.

The oracles of God contain not merely promises to renew the hearts of his people, and their own prayers to be renewed, but explicit declarations, that this is done by the Holy One of Israel. Thus, Prov. xxi. 1, it is declared, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord. As the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will." And not only does he possess this power, but he actually uses it whenever an individual is turned from the error of his ways. Thus, Phil. ii. 13: "For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." And 1 Cor. xii. 4, 5, 6: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God who worketh all in all." But the most notable declaration of this truth is contained in Eph. ii. Here Paul said to the brethren, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come

he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them." Here, then, our renovation is distinctly ascribed to God. The reclaiming of us from walking in the lusts of the flesh and of the mind, and our recovery from the control of our own hearts, and our creation in his image, are declared to be not of works, but of grace; and as new creatures, the saints are declared to be his *workmanship*, created anew unto good works.

Now, as the scriptures declare the heart of man, by nature, to be depraved; as God has promised to renew the hearts of his people; as they are found praying, that they may be turned, and that their hearts may be created anew; and as the recovery of the heart, from the corruption and ruin of the fall, is explicitly ascribed to God, it follows that the natural heart is alienated from God, that it is not subject to his law, neither, indeed, can be. Hence, it may be asked, I. Is it not possible to recover it by choosing, resolving, and determining not to indulge its carnal desires and propensities, and by resolutely "*willing*" that they shall not exist? That men sometimes resolve to amend their desires and propensities, in some future period, I do not deny. But this is altogether a different thing from an act of the will, forbidding their present existence. No unregenerate heart ever performed such an act. The acts of the will are only expressions of the leading and controlling desires and feelings of the heart. The feelings and desires produce the volitions. These volitions are only the concentration of feelings and desires already in

the mind. The feelings and desires which already exist, being thus concentrated in view of some object, produce a determination of the mind to do whatever it does, or to abstain from that which it determines not to do. But while the desires and feelings have this power over the volitions or determinations of the mind, it is true, that the volitions have no direct power over the feelings. We have been so accustomed to suppose, that the determinations of our minds have a full control over us, that it will be hard to receive this doctrine. But let me ask you to stop and consider. The volitions have control over only a few parts of our material frames. They can move the hands and the feet. They can open the eyes and the mouth, and they can turn the body. But what more can they do? Can a mere act of the will prevent the eyes, while open, from seeing? Can a determination of the will prevent the ears from hearing? Can it so awe the sense of tasting into submission, that the qualities of the food which we eat shall not be discerned? Can it bid the sense of feeling into such inaction, that we shall not perceive the heat or the cold, and shall not be pained by frost, or by fire, or by wounds, however severe? Can the will cause the heart to beat? Can it regulate the circulation of the blood? Now, it will at once be conceded, that the volitions of man have no control over these things. And while it is true, that they have but a limited control over our material frame, it is equally true, that their influence over the mind is limited. In some degree they govern the understanding, and beyond this their influence is exceedingly feeble. As the volitions, or determinations of the mind, are produced by its feelings, in reference to any object of sense, or meditation, so they are altogether subject to these feelings; while the feelings are in no respect directly subject to them. And as the determinations

have no control over the feelings and desires, it is evident that they are of no avail in respect to our renovation. Indeed, the natural heart never chooses immediate obedience. It always chooses to defer the service of God, though it resolves that it will choose this service at some future period. Now, as the feelings and desires of the mind have an unbroken control over its determinations immediately to do any thing, it is certain that these depraved feelings and desires will prevent a determination of the mind to do the will of God. It is certain that this prevention will extend through every moment in which the heart shall remain carnal. It is certain, that whatever resolution may be formed ultimately to obey, it will be swept away by the tide of depraved feelings, and desires, and propensities. And though the mind may deceive itself with the notion, that it will choose to obey at some future time; though it may pledge itself to choose obedience in some coming era in its history, or circumstance in its existence; yet it does not choose obediently; nor so long as it remains carnal, will it ever choose, or act obediently. Before it will thus choose and thus act, the mind itself must be so changed by grace, that these feelings and desires, instead of being sinful, shall be holy. And when this is done, the mind will as cordially choose obedience, and act obediently, as it now chooses disobedience and acts disobediently. This is the grand reason why we need to be born of the Spirit; why the stony heart needs to be taken away, and a heart of flesh bestowed upon all the impenitent.

The subject suggests, II. The inquiry, have we no control over the feelings and desires of our minds?

This branch of the subject is exceedingly important. It is admitted, that the mind has some indirect control over the feelings and desires. In order to excite any

feeling, or desire within us, an object must be perceived, or some distinct conception of it must be formed. Now, when an object awakens unholy feelings and desires within us, we must turn away our eyes from beholding it, and the feeling and desire will probably subside. And thus, by keeping the eyes from seeing, or the mind from conceiving things calculated to excite sinful desires, feelings, and passions, these internal evils will be very much at rest. It is this turning away their eyes from evil, this keeping the thoughts from meditation on objects calculated to excite unholy passions, that makes the chief difference in the characters of the impenitent, and prevents those who do it, from rushing into those sins which involve others in infamy and wo.

But though the turning away of the eyes and the mind from meditating evil; and the contemplation of objects which are noble and excellent; may actually make a wide difference in the external character of men, and in the internal exercise of the unholy feelings and desires, yet it is to be remembered, that the human heart, under all these operations, remains the same. If, after a long period, the eyes are again suffered to behold transgression, and the mind to meditate it, there will be found in every unregenerate bosom the same unholy feelings, and the same elements of iniquity. Long depression does not eradicate them. Long cessation of violent exercise does not expunge them. They are ready to spring up in all the vigor of youth, and to hurry poor fallen humanity into ruin.

Nor is it possible for the mind, by its own resolution, to hush them into silence. Let a strong affection seize the heart, and it controls and determines the volitions, but is not determined by them. In vain may the mother, whose heart is agitated by grief for the loss of a darling child, resolve to stop it. No effort of her mind can

repress it, for her grief will rise and flow forth, sweeping away all resistance. So of every other natural feeling of the mind: so of our unholy feelings, passions, and propensities. Though their exercise may be checked, yet no power but that of him, who commanded the winds and the waves to be still, can destroy them, and produce in their place the "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." The king's heart is not in his own hand. It is not turned by his own volitions. It is in the hand of the Lord. "He turneth it whithersoever he will."

The subject suggests, III. That all beings act freely. The holy beings, who stand around the throne of God, act according to the law of God, and with this the holy desires and feelings of their hearts correspond. The spirits, which kept not their first estate, act freely. They act according to the dictates of their feelings and desires, and these are always unholy. The saints in this life act freely. Their souls are renewed. Their feelings and desires in a good degree correspond with the rule of duty which God has given them. The wicked act freely. They indulge, in different degrees, the desires and feelings of their hearts. These flow forth spontaneously; and all the determinations of their minds to neglect what God has required, or to do what he has forbidden, are produced by them. Thus they sin freely. Though the determinations of their minds be only in one direction, and while unregenerate can be in no other, yet they are free. It is a fearful freedom; free to sin; free to overwhelm themselves in ruin.

But it may here be asked, are they not equally free to be holy? To this I reply, that I know of no other hinderance except their own hearts. "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." Their own feelings and desires tend to sin. Their own spontaneous choice

is sin. And this choice will be everlasting, unless the heart, which has constantly made it, and which is now making it, shall be renewed by the power of the Holy Ghost, so as to choose what it now refuses.

The subject suggests, IV. That if any shall eventually be saved, it must be ascribed altogether to the will of God.

As our hearts are by nature so depraved as not to fear God and keep his commandments; as we do not choose to obey his law, or to believe in his Son, or to receive the Holy Ghost; it follows, that the salvation of God is not the choice of our own hearts. If, therefore, it shall ever become ours, it will not be because we have chosen God, but because he hath chosen us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. It will be, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but, merely of the tender, the distinguishing mercy of our God, which chose us in Christ Jesus before the world began. I know, indeed, that this doctrine is not apt to be agreeable to the mass of mankind. But why should it not be? It is a truth—it is a melancholy truth—that the race of man has ruined itself. It is a sad truth, that our hearts are depraved. It is a mournful fact, that we will not come to Christ. Why, then, should we not rejoice to hear, that God is better to us than we are to ourselves? Why should we not forever praise him for his unspeakable gift?

SERMON VI.

THE OPERATIONS OF THE SPIRIT ON THOSE WHO PERISH.

ISAIAH lxiii. 10.—"And they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit: Therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and fought against them."

FROM a misapprehension of the nature of the promises in the four Evangelists, respecting the gift of the Holy Ghost, it has sometimes occurred, that the passages in the Old Testament, respecting the Holy Spirit and his work, have received but an inadequate share of attention. Because the Saviour promised to his disciples to send the Holy Ghost into the world, it has most erroneously been inferred, that he had not previously been a very prominent agent in human salvation. Indeed, the individuals have not been few, who seem to have assumed, that his appropriate work commenced on the day of pentecost. Others, who evidently admitted in their reasonings the operation of the Holy Spirit on the minds of men previously to the day of pentecost, were yet so strongly persuaded, that the *reign* of the Spirit began on that day, as to overlook the affecting descriptions of his work in almost every part of the Old Testament. Hence, there has been a disposition to treat the religion of the Old Testament as consisting chiefly in external rites, and to interpret every expression, respecting his operations, as pertaining merely to the exhibition of truth, or to the employment of external means. Hence, the doctrine of the Spirit, as developed in the Old Testament, has been obscured and almost excluded from human view. But whatever our views of this subject may have been, it is still true, that from the first crea-

tion of man, the Holy Ghost was in the world,—from the day of the first human apostacy, he was engaged in the work of human salvation—and till this time he has been unremittingly employed in delivering men from the power of iniquity. Nor by promising to send him into the world, was it the intention of the Saviour to intimate, that he was not *then* in the world, or that he had not been always in the world. All that can be meant by these promises, consistently with the analogy of the scriptures is, that at the day of pentecost, and afterwards through that whole generation, the Spirit should operate in an uncommon degree in working miracles, inspiring men to write divine truth, and in convincing and converting sinners. Does any one doubt, whether the Holy Spirit had done all these things before the day of pentecost? Permit me, then, to ask him to tell, who inspired the prophets to write the scriptures of the Old Testament? By whom were miracles wrought in ancient times? What did the Saviour mean, when he spoke of casting out devils by the Spirit of God? What did David mean when he prayed, "Uphold me by thy free Spirit; take not thy Holy Spirit from me?" The answers of these questions could not fail to evolve the doctrine, that in all periods of the world the Holy Ghost had been an efficient agent in the salvation of men; that before the coming of Christ, as well as after it, he was the author of conviction, conversion, and sanctification, and consequently the language respecting the Holy Ghost, in the Old Testament, is to be interpreted by precisely the same principles, and applied in precisely the same manner to individuals, as if it were found in the writings of the apostles. Hence, when we read in the prophets respecting men, that "*they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit*," we are to understand it in precisely the same manner as its corresponding passages

in the latter part of the volume of inspiration. The men of this generation committed the sin which the apostle charged those of his times to avoid, when he said, "grieve not the Spirit."

The subject to which I desire now to call your attention, is *the operations of the Holy Spirit on the impenitent*, who eventually perish. "*They rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit: Therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and fought against them.*"

It is not to be denied, that some of the impenitent have received immediate communications from God. Thus, God spake to Cain, to Abimelech, and to Balaam. Thus also many shall come before him at the last day and say, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done many marvellous works? to whom he will reply, *I never knew you.*

But it is not this class of operations, to which I desire to call your attention. There is manifestly some other operation on the minds of the impenitent, which has reference to their personal duty—and the resistance of which is highly criminal in the sight of God.

This is evinced, I. In the views and feelings of men concerning various particulars in religion. Of these I shall mention four.

1. Respecting the character of God.

The character of God is clearly unfolded in the scriptures. Here are seen, not only his eternal power and godhead, as also in the works of nature, but all his glorious perfections. Here his justice is disclosed. Here his mercy is developed. Here his veracity is declared. Here his holiness is distinctly expounded, and set forth before the eyes of every human being. Here his whole character is clearly brought to light. Nothing is concealed; nothing is obscured. Neither in the character itself, nor in the descriptions of this cha-

racter, is there any thing which debars any individual from arriving at some just appreciations of the perfections of God. But notwithstanding this revelation of his perfections, it is an affecting fact, that unaided man does not learn his true character. It is a fact, that although, in common with an intelligent heathen, he admits that there is a God, yet he is almost entirely unacquainted with his perfections. He has heard that God is holy, but has no just appreciation of his holiness. He has heard that God is just, but has no correct view of his justice. He has heard that God is merciful and true, but he has no correct views either of his mercy or his truth. Under the exhibition of these perfections by the works of nature, but chiefly by revelation, he remains ignorant of their nature. As the blind man hears of colors, and believes in their existence, but has no just notions of what they are, so he hears of the perfections of God, admits that they exist, but does not even intellectually perceive their nature, or their claims on his attention and homage. This is the ordinary state of the mind in respect to God. Now, it will readily be admitted by all, who have duly observed the course of their own minds in respect to God, that there have been short periods in their own history, when a sense of the presence of God seemed to fall upon them; when their eyes were so far opened, as dimly to see what they had never seen before in his character; as dimly to perceive something of his holiness, justice, mercy, and truth; as fully to understand, that internal holiness is a requisite qualification for admission to his favor, and that without a great and internal change, they cannot be admitted to the kingdom of God. There is no real Christian, who has diligently observed the operations of his own mind, who will not declare, that previously to the time of his conversion, there were periods in which his mind seemed

thus to apprehend the perfections of God, and to be affected by them. And notwithstanding he distinctly remembered these impressions, yet it was impossible to reproduce them by an act of his own will, or an effort of his own mind; and that he was entirely unconscious of the power by which they were produced, and knew no other cause for their existence except the operation of the Most High. This also is often acknowledged by the impenitent; and they repeatedly complain, because they do not, and cannot feel as they once felt; and they are wont to speak of these seasons, and to say, "O, if we had then repented, we should have obtained salvation."

The same principle is illustrated, 2. In the views of men respecting the divine law.

That all men, especially under the influence of divine truth, have some general views of the demands of the Lord, is readily conceded. But while they readily admit the righteousness of its general principles, they are utterly ignorant of their extent and spirituality. They do not perceive that these principles, in all their minuteness, are applicable to themselves, nor apprehend the nature or extent of their guilt in continually violating them. *So blind are men by nature, that although they almost invariably* discover and condemn any departure in *others*, from the general principles of the last six commandments, yet they are ready to *excuse*, if not to *tolerate*, deviations from them in their own conduct. They almost entirely overlook the spirituality of even these commands, and feel at full liberty to indulge generally the passions and unholy feelings, which are prohibited equally with the unholy acts themselves. And while in *these commands* they do not perceive their whole duty; while, in many instances, their minds are so blinded as to have no abiding sense of their obligations to one another, it is true, that men, in regard to their

duties to God, are by nature far more senseless. Who, amongst all the children of men, has an abiding sense of the presence of the Almighty? Who is there, that by nature has continually felt his obligation to love and adore Jehovah? Who is there, that has constantly felt himself bound by the most sacred responsibility to have no other God before Jehovah, to love and serve the Creator rather than the creature, to treat his holy name with appropriate reverence, and sacredly to observe his holy day—abstaining from all the transactions, words, and thoughts, which pertain to ordinary avocations? Who is there, that constantly sees each deviation from love and obedience to God, in thought, word, and deed; and is constantly pained on account of his alienation from the High and Holy One? It is an affecting fact, that in this respect, man, by nature, is almost entirely insensible of his obligations to God, and ignorant of his own transgressions. While left to himself, he may indeed believe that here and there an act of his life is wrong, but he has no suspicion that his heart is not right with God. Now, there are seasons, ordinarily of short continuance, when his eyes are so opened that he sees the claims of God to be vastly more extensive than he had been accustomed to suppose them to be—when he perceives himself to be a sinner, not merely in respect to a few outrageous deeds, but also in regard to all his thoughts and feelings; and when he appreciates the fact, that the carnal mind is enmity against God, not subject to his law, neither, indeed, can be. Thus, not by a long process of study, but, as it were, by sight; not by a long inquiry, but by a sudden opening of the eyes, he perceives claims upon him which he had never suspected, and violations of obligations which he had never conjectured. His anxiety is excited. But if he fail of coming into the kingdom of God, these views and feel-

ings soon cease. He remembers their existence. He believes the facts with which they are connected. But no effort of his own mind can again produce them. They are gone, and unless the Lord restore them, they can never return.

The same principle is illustrated, 3. In the feelings of the impenitent respecting Christ and the way of salvation.

Though Christ, and redemption through his blood, be preached in the hearing of the ungodly, they do not appreciate his excellence. Like the disciples on the way to Emmaus, their eyes seem to be holden, so that they do not see him. And hence, the prophet complained, and in behalf of all the servants of God, inquired, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He hath no form, nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men." The mode of salvation, which he has devised and executed, seems to be altogether unnecessary; and hence, though "he was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities," yet impenitent men are accustomed to regard this as an ordinary transaction. They are accustomed to esteem him, *stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.* They do not see their own sins. They do not see the necessity of such a Saviour, nor of such a sacrifice. *And hence, they despise, and wonder, and perish.* Now, it is an affecting fact, that the natural man perceiveth not the things of Christ, nor of his salvation. But, one portion of the work of the Holy Ghost is to convince the world of sin, because they believe not on Christ. And hence, it occurs, that the minds of men are sometimes excited to meditate on Christ, and the

way of salvation. They are, in this respect, convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. They are made to understand their pressing need of a Saviour, and of his righteousness, and of deliverance by him from the power of the adversary. Hence, they are made affectingly to know the importance of some other righteousness than their own, as a ground of acceptance with God, and to understand that they can be saved through Christ alone. All these views the impenitent may have, for it is the work of the Holy Ghost to convince men of sin, because they believe not on Christ. Now, the period of this internal conviction, and of its accompanying sense of guilt, is short. The remembrance of it as a fact, may be eternal; but the sense of sin and the feeling of danger are commonly limited to a few days, and there are ordinarily but few such scenes in the life of any individual. In the intervals between them, the sinner can remember distinctly what he had been made to see, and what he had been made to feel of his own guilt and need of deliverance. But like any other past scene, no effort of his own will can renew the affecting views and feelings which he then had. Hence, men, even *on the borders of the grave*, are wont to complain, and say, "The days *were*, in which we saw our own sins, in which we felt the necessity of being saved by Christ, and of receiving him as our portion, but now all these feelings are gone. We cannot revive them. Now, we know our condition, but have no *feeling* concerning it. O, that we had been wise, that we had considered this, that we had thought on our latter end."

The same truth is also illustrated, 4. In the feelings of men respecting eternity.

It is a fact acknowledged by all, that when left to their own way, men think but little of eternity. Even if they sometimes think of their future condition, their

thoughts are more like the dreams of the night, than the careful and practical plans and measures of the day. They live, as if their existence were to terminate at death. Perhaps it would be more in accordance with facts to say, that they live as if their continuance here were to be eternal. They buy, they build, they heap up treasure, as if this world were to be their home through perpetual duration. This is the prevailing tendency of the human propensities. Time, with its employments and interests, engages their thoughts, elicits their affections, and commands all their powers. Eternity, with its weighty interests, is ordinarily forgotten; and when remembered, is not felt to be of sufficient importance to take the affections and the thoughts from those things, whose fashion soon fadeth away. But notwithstanding this propensity to carelessness, there are ordinarily short seasons in the history of every immortal being, when this carelessness seems to be broken up; when men are made practically to feel, that life is short, that there is meaning in the words, heaven and hell, and that they are exposed, by their carelessness and sin, to lose all the joys of the one, and to incur all the woes of the other. There are occasionally times, when their hearts beat heavy with concern, and their eyes glare with terror, and their souls are agitated by fearful anticipations. Now, after even these views and feelings in those who are impenitent, it is remarkable that again their worldliness gains dominion over them, and their former carelessness again prevails—and they walk as securely in the way to death as they had previously done. They remember, indeed, how they once felt. They can call to mind the affecting views which they once had, and the feeling of distress, which, like the tumult of many waters, agitated their bosoms. But they cannot produce these feelings again in their souls.

No effort of will, no power of recollection, no meditation on the word of God, awakens the slumbering sensations of their souls. The same truths are considered; the same dangers conceived; the same end anticipated. And yet the same feelings are not awakened. There are no means within the reach of impenitent men, by which they can produce the wakeful interest, the sense of guilt, the anxiety for eternal safety, which they once had. Thus, in respect to the character of God—in respect to the law and its claims—in respect to Christ and his salvation—in respect to heaven and its glories —there are sometimes in the human bosom, feelings, which neither the consideration of the truth, nor the will of impenitent man, nor the power of recollection, nor association, can again produce. These things plainly imply, that such states of the human mind are produced by the power of the Holy Ghost.

This is confirmed, II. By the fact, that this sense of guilt and feeling of anxiety are produced without the aid of any other truth, except those which had been previously known to the impenitent, in all the periods of their carelessness.

If in each of these periods, in which the impenitent are awakened, some truth were brought before their understandings, which is not contained in the oracles of God—and which they had previously neither heard nor known—it would then be reasonable to refer these scenes of awakening to something else besides the Holy Ghost. But who can pretend, that in these times any truth was brought before his mind, which he had not previously known, and often read, and frequently considered. The difference, then, does not consist in the truth, but in the mind; and the thing to be accounted for, is not any changes in the truth, but in the mind and the conscience. Ordinarily, in reading the same truth,

the mind saw only some general directions, and could hardly conceive, that its own feelings and deeds were not in a general agreement with it. Now, it is so changed as to see something of the nature and extent of these directions, which it had not before seen, and to know its own transgressions, and to fear and tremble in view of them. This change is not then in the truth, nor is it wrought by the truth as an efficient agent. If it were, the effects would in all cases be the same. Nor is it wrought by any new truth; for no new truth has come before the mind. It is wrought in full view of a truth, which had long been before the mind, which had previously been considered in the days of carelessness, and had produced no change; which had afterwards been considered in days of carelessness, and had produced no such sensations; and all the knowledge of which, gained in days of the enlightening of the understanding, is not adequate again to put the mind into the same condition; and all the efforts of the understanding, the recollections of past awakenings, and the resolutions of the mind, to revive the same feelings, cannot produce them. If these things do not evince some super-human, some divine operation on the mind, then we know not what train of effects establish such an operation.

III. The production of these views and feelings has always been attributed to the Holy Ghost.

Those, who have been thus affected, acknowledge it to be the work of the Almighty. Even amongst the impenitent, they who are careful to observe their own feelings, and are candid in stating them, unhesitatingly acknowledge these effects to be produced by the operation of the Holy Spirit. They confess, that in these seasons no new truth was presented to their minds; that the precepts and motives in reference to which these clearer views, and these excited feelings existed, had

always been known, and repeatedly considered by them. And yet, except in these specified cases, they never had these extended views, nor these excited feelings, in regard to their duty and their condition. They confess that they distinctly recollect these views and these feelings, that they have distinct conceptions of what they were, but are utterly incompetent to produce them in their own minds. Now, as their minds remain the same, and the truth remains the same, and yet their combined operation is not capable of again producing these results, it is evident that some third cause has produced them. And, as nothing else, but he who made the mind, has access to it, the conclusion is irresistible in their own minds, and in those of candid observers, that this awakening of the understanding and of the conscience, is produced by the Holy Spirit. This they readily acknowledge, wherever their minds have not been perverted by a corrupt theology, or by infidelity. Nor is this acknowledgment confined to the impenitent. All, who have been really born of the Spirit, promptly attribute these effects to the power of the Holy Ghost. They speak of repeated instances in which their minds were excited—in which they had affecting views of God and his law, of Christ and the way of salvation—of the necessity of being born of the Spirit—of the importance of fleeing from the wrath to come. And they uniformly attribute these effects to the Holy Spirit. They know no other way in which they can be produced. They can see no other cause adequate to produce such views and feelings. Even when the great truths of revealed religion are pressed upon them, their own minds are incapable of producing or renewing these convictions. And hence, each Christian, in accordance with his own views, as well as with those of other saints, and with the scriptures, attributes these things to the

operation of him, who convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

IV. This view of the subject is amply sustained by the scriptures.

It is a remarkable fact, that the doctrine, that the Spirit strives with men, is seldom *specifically taught* in the word of God. It seems everywhere to be *assumed*, as a truth well known to the children of men. Like many other truths, it does not seem to have been directly asserted in the scriptures, but everywhere referred to, as well understood and fully received by mankind. In this respect, it is treated like some other prominent truths. It is a fact, that the existence of God is not *originally and formally* declared in the scriptures. This fact is assumed to be known. And hence, the scriptures, without stopping to declare that there is a God, proceed to say, "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth." Thus, also, of the Holy Spirit. Instead of saying, "The Holy Spirit strives with impenitent men," we are told, first of all, "*My Spirit shall not always strive with man.*" The Old Testament abounds with instances in which this operation of the Holy Spirit on the impenitent, even on those who *continue to be impenitent*, and die in their sins, is thus indirectly declared. I know it will be replied, that this was an operation only by laws and motives. That this may sometimes be true, I cheerfully admit; yet, if there were nothing else but laws and motives, how can we account for the fact, that the wicked are so often said to "resist the Holy Ghost?" If nothing operated on the mind of the sinner but laws and motives, then he could directly and immediately resist nothing but laws and motives, although remotely it would indeed be resistance of the Spirit. But if this were all, why are we not so informed in the scriptures? Why are we not

told that the sinner resists nothing but commandments and motives? Is it not true that laws and motives are one thing, and the Holy Spirit altogether another? And when the scriptures declare the unqualified fact, that men resist the Holy Ghost, what right have men to say, that they only resist the precepts and motives which he sets before them? What right have they to insert these words, as if contained in the oracles of divine wisdom, and to declare that they ought to be understood in every passage which charges the impenitent with resisting the Spirit? That men, by nature, have no heart to obey the precepts, or yield to the motives of revealed religion; that they readily reject them, is certainly evident. But that they directly resist, not only these things, which were originally given by the Spirit, but also the Holy Spirit himself, in awakening the attention, convincing them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, is equally true. And any other view of the passages in the Old Testament, which pertain to the Spirit, would prostrate the spirituality of its religion, and reduce it to a mere cumbrous mass of external rites and ceremonies. The language of the Old Testament, then, respecting the operation of the Spirit, is to be understood in precisely the same sense as that of the New Testament. And when men are there said to resist the Spirit, to vex the Spirit, and to be abandoned by God, it is to be understood to relate to the Holy Ghost, in the same sense as if used after the day of pentecost, or even in the present generation.

These passages are numerous. A few only can be cited. Of those who dwelt on the face of the earth in the time of Noah, God said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Again it is said, "Ephraim is joined to idols. Let him alone." This passage must relate to those operations of his Spirit, which were requisite to

bring the men of Ephraim to salvation. In John xvi. 8, 9, 10, 11, the Saviour said of the Holy Spirit, "And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." In Acts vii. 51, Stephen said to the Sanhedrim, and to the multitude by whom he was surrounded, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost. As your fathers did, so do ye." Here the fact is distinctly recognised, that the ancient Israelites resisted not merely the words of divine truth, but also the Holy Spirit himself. And it is also declared, that the men of this generation always resisted the Holy Ghost. The resistance, both of the word and the Spirit, is distinctly intimated in the phrase, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in *heart* and *ears*." The circumcision of the heart is the work of the Spirit. This they resisted, while, at the same time, they closed their ears against the preaching of this martyr. In Eph. iv. 30, men are commanded "not to grieve the Spirit." And in Thess. v. 19, they are commanded "not to quench the Spirit."

But there are two remaining passages, which unequivocally show, that the Holy Spirit operates on those who shall finally perish. In Hebrews x. 28, 29, it is written, "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant" "an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace?" Here, amongst the crimes of those for whose sins there remaineth no more sacrifice, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, is included, "the despite

unto the Spirit of Grace." Here, then, it is manifest, that the Holy Spirit strives with those who finally perish.

But in addition to this, there is a fearful passage respecting the sin, which hath no forgiveness, either in this life or in the life to come. It is the *blasphemy* against the Holy Ghost. This consists not in infidelity, nor merely in disbelieving miracles; for Saul of Tarsus, and many others, were long unwilling to believe the miracles which were wrought by Christ and his apostles. It consists in resisting the internal operations of the Spirit, on the understanding and the conscience, and of reviling him and his works. Many resist the Spirit and perish, who never commit the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. But the fact, that men perish in consequence of doing despite unto the Holy Spirit, and committing blasphemy against him, is ample evidence that he operates on those who shall finally perish. Like the ancient sons of Israel, they rebel, and grieve his Holy Spirit; therefore he turns to be their enemy, and destroys them.

Now, as there are seasons in which the Holy Spirit is operating on the impenitent, it becomes all to remember,

1. That these seasons are very solemn.

The Great God is then graciously present. He who made the soul draws affectingly near. He comes to visit the poor immortal spirit—overwhelmed with its depravity, polluted by its sins, and loathsome by reason of its offences. He comes to let in the light upon it, that it may see its own dreary and fearful condition. He comes to show it the way of escape. He comes to give sad anticipations of future wo to all who continue impenitent. He comes to call the individual to flee for his life and escape, lest he die. What other scenes, in

the course of eternal duration, can be compared with these? Into what other moments are the concerns of eternity so affectingly pressed? In what other hours are interests of such amazing magnitude decided? If now the sinner rejects the operations of the Spirit, he will mourn at the last, and say, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved." And Jesus will say, "O, that thou hadst harkened unto me; then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness like an overflowing stream."

2. These seasons are not frequent.

There seems to have been an impression, that individuals at all times have enough of the Spirit to awake and become reconciled to God. But though they are guilty for every day and hour of impenitence, yet it seems to be altogether unwarranted by the scripture to say, that the Holy Spirit, by his awakening influences, is thus constantly operating on the impenitent. The very declarations of the scriptures seem to repel such a conclusion. If the Spirit were thus continually operating on the understandings and consciences of men, what can those passages mean, which say, "I will pour out my spirit upon you;" and, "The Holy Ghost fell on them;" and others of a similar nature? These passages are utterly inconsistent with the prevailing impression, that the Holy Spirit is constantly convincing the sinner of his guilt, and awakening in him a tender concern for his soul. No, my impenitent hearers, it is not true, that the Holy Spirit is always thus striving with you. The Bible does not teach it. Your own recollection of these seasons does not confirm it. The recollections of those who are converted do not evince it. It is their testimony, that here and there, in the course of their impenitence, they were thus visited. We hear them speak of one, two, or perhaps three such scenes,

which they distinctly recollect, but, in all, they are few. And so it will be with you. The God who sustains you has probably thus awakened you, and when he has done it a few times more, he will cease. Perhaps he has already ceased in respect to some of you. It is an affecting consideration. But it must not be concealed from your view. There are but few instances in the history of any human being, when he is thus visited; and then the scene of divine operations is closed, and the poor soul fills up the measure of his iniquity, and goes away to his eternal prison.

3. These seasons are exceedingly painful.

It is an element of our native depravity, to think of ourselves above what we ought to think. Hence, we have no adequate view of our own native corruption. We have no just conception of the number, or the enormity of our sins. We are entirely unconscious of the manner in which we appear in the eyes of angels, and of the Holy One of Israel. Ignorant of our own sins, we have no apprehension that they are seen, remembered, and recorded in heaven. But when the Holy Spirit opens our eyes to see more of the nature of the divine law; when he excites our consciences, and causes us to see our condition, in some degree, as it is seen by angels; then our high conceit of ourselves is humbled. We are surprised. We are amazed. We are pained. We are agitated, lest our sins should overwhelm us in eternal sorrows. In comparison with the other periods of our impenitence, these are times of great distress. God above is known to be angry with us every day. Our danger is seen to be great. Our fears are excited. Our eyes are open to behold our sins, and to see their end, and yet we do not like to forsake them. There is not such an heart in us as to fear God and keep his commandments. After a few painful struggles, between

the sense of duty and the evil propensities; after, perhaps, many agonies in the impenitent, because they must forsake their sins, or bear their eternal consequences; they again close their eyes, and hush the voice of conscience, and go on as if they had never been convinced of their sins, or made to understand their danger.

4. In eternity, their convictions of sin will be complete and eternal.

At the great day the books will be opened, and the dead judged according to the things written in the books. Beyond this scene, there will be nothing to render them blind to their own sin. The busy occupations of this world will have ceased. The festivities and the mirth of time shall be known no more. No sons of this world will then be able to take delight in their own sins, or to forget them, or to trifle with the eternal consciousness of their transgressions. Above them, and all around them, the glorious perfections of the Godhead will shine. The great principles of the divine law will be illustrated. *There*, their own sins will be seen by themselves, not with the dim eyes and the perverted vision of this world, but in all the clearness of eternity. Though here they may be, in a great degree, ignorant of their corruptions and their sins, yet *there* they shall know them, even as they are now known by God. *There*, everlasting shame shall invade them, and eternal contempt shall be poured upon them; for many shall come forth from their graves, to shame and everlasting contempt. *There*, their worm shall not die, nor the fire be quenched; but they shall be an abhorrence unto all the empire of the Almighty.

5. The subject suggests, that no degree of light, nor power of motives, will regenerate the soul.

It is altogether probable, that many who have perished in their sins, have had a greater knowledge of the pre-

cepts and motives of Christianity, and have been more thoroughly convinced of sin, than others who have been born of the Spirit. But even if this be not true, in respect to this world, it cannot be denied, that on going into eternity, an amount of light concerning the character of God, his law, the way of salvation, and the eternal condition of the ungodly, is poured into their minds, as much greater than is enjoyed by the most favored minds in this world, as the sun is greater than the most insignificant star. And yet they are not converted. Satan himself is as fully acquainted with all these subjects as Gabriel. He has beheld the glory of God. He knows the divine law. He understands the delights of heaven. He has experienced the pains and horrors of hell. And yet he is not converted. It may be said, that there is no ground to expect the pardon of his rebellion. This is, indeed, true. But why should this prevent his conversion, if a knowledge of duty, and of the motives which are represented as bringing beings to repentance, are sufficient to effect it? It is a solemn truth, that neither light, nor motives, can subdue our rebellion, and regenerate our souls. Nothing but an operation on the heart—transforming it into the divine image—can prepare us to dwell with God forever. And without this renovation, all our light, and knowledge, and convictions, instead of bringing us nearer to God, will tend only to our deeper despair.

SERMON VII.

DIVINE ILLUMINATION.

PSALM cxix. 18.—"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

THIS prayer is one of the most remarkable of all those which are contained in the word of God. An individual is here asking God to open his eyes, of whom there is no account that he was ever blind. From every part of his history it is evident, that till the day of his death, he was able to discern whatever occurred around him. Had it been recorded of David as of Bartimeus, that he was blind, it would be easy to interpret this passage, and to see the full reason for the supplication of the writer. But when it is well known, that the psalmist never lost his natural sight; when it is understood, that till the day of his death he was able to see; it then becomes evident, that he does not refer to his natural eyes. There must, therefore, be some other respect in which he did not see; and some other eyes, which needed to be opened. He undoubtedly refers to his understanding in a spiritual respect. This, in man by nature, is uniformly represented in the scriptures as blind. The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit. And hence, when men are brought into the kingdom of God, and made to participate in the blessings of reconciliation to him, the eyes of their understandings are said to be *opened*, or *enlightened*. This is accordant with the experience of all Christians. In the prayer of David, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law," there are some

noticeable particulars. Of these it is proper to mention, not only that he had natural eyes, and was capable of reading the law, whenever he chose, but that the law itself was in his possession, subject to his inspection, and all its parts lay open distinctly to his view. He needed neither natural sight, nor any external facility for reading, observing, and understanding it. What, then, is the meaning of his prayer? Is it not plain, that notwithstanding the possession of natural eyes, and of all the particulars of the law, there was some obstacle to his beholding the "WONDROUS THINGS OUT OF THE LAW?" Is it not evident, that there were other eyes which needed to be opened? Is it not plain, that there was a difficulty in the understanding which must be removed? To this difficulty, he refers, when he prays, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

The passage, then, suggests that a spiritual understanding of divine things is the gift of God.

It is necessary to specify, I. Some things in which it does not consist.

1. Spiritual understanding does not consist in any degree of knowledge, acquired in the ordinary manner. By their natural understandings, men may arrive, through the aid of the scriptures, at a knowledge not merely of the existence of God, and of his natural attributes, but also at some faint view of his moral perfections. They may also obtain some general views of their duty to him, and to each other, and they may have some faint appreciation of the bearing of their conduct on their eternal condition. These views of God, of duty, and of eternity, may be rendered more clear, affecting, and distressing, by the operation of the Holy Spirit on their understandings and consciences. This natural light and knowledge may be vastly

increased; this information concerning God, and duty, and eternity, may be greatly enlarged; and yet no degree of this kind of knowledge will amount to spiritual understanding. It is acquired only by the use of natural faculties, aided indeed by the common influences of the Spirit, but not renovated by "*special grace.*" Thus, an increase, however great, in knowledge of the things of God, is not spiritual understanding. In this increase there is nothing different from what exists in the apostate spirits, and the souls of impenitent men made perfect in misery.

2. It does not consist in revelations of new truths. For if it consisted in revealing new truths, then it would follow, that all to whom revelations have been made, possess this spiritual understanding, and are the children of God. For this understanding is confined to those who are born of the Spirit. Hence, David prayed, "Give me understanding, and I shall live." And the prophet said, "All thy children shall be taught of God." And the Saviour declared, "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." "It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God. The revealing of new truths, pertains to the miraculous operations of the Spirit, which is not unfrequently shared by the impenitent. For many shall say to Christ at the last day, "Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?" To whom he shall reply, "I never knew you, depart from me." Now, this spiritual understanding is found in every genuine Christian. It cannot, therefore, mean the reception of new truths from God. For God informs us, that he has set in the church *some prophets*. Why should he do this, if he immediately reveals his will to all in the church?

The scriptures declare, that immediate revelation, and all other miraculous gifts, shall cease in the church; while faith, hope, and charity, shall be permanent. In 1 Cor. xiii. 8, the apostle says, "Charity never faileth, but whether there be *prophecies* they shall fail, whether there be tongues they shall cease, whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away." That he means knowledge communicated by inspiration, is evident from the fact, that it is mentioned in connexion with "prophecies" and "tongues." And it cannot be understood of knowledge acquired in any other way, for knowledge is now obtained, and will continue to be obtained by the ordinary use of our faculties forever.

Such a view of the subject, as implies immediate revelations to all the people of God, is injurious to the scriptures, and degrades them to a level with human conceptions and imaginations, respecting God and duty.

Of those who, since the days of the apostles, have professed to receive new revelations, scarcely any two individuals have exactly agreed in their doctrines, and most of them have been grossly at variance with each other, and with the scriptures.

Of the thousands who have thus claimed to be inspired, no one has brought to light a single new truth, or declared a single new duty, or held forth a single new motive to induce men to glorify God; or made the way to heaven a single degree clearer than it is made in the scriptures.

The result of these revelations has always been, not the promotion of purity in doctrine and life, but error, confusion, and infidelity. Hence, it is plain, that God, in giving spiritual understanding, does not give new revelations.

3. Nor does it consist merely in lively and affecting views of the truths already revealed in the word of God.

Whoever has spiritual understanding, will, indeed, possess a lively and affecting view of the things revealed in the scriptures; and so, also, will they who are thoroughly convinced of their sins in this world, as well as the spirits in the regions of despair. No one probably has a more complete and affecting view of divine truth, than they who are finally lost. That a spiritual understanding is attended by lively and affecting views of this truth, is unquestionable; but the nature of these views, and not the fact of their existence, is that which distinguishes them from the experience of devils and lost men.

4. Nor does it consist in convincing the understanding and the conscience. This is generally done, indeed, in the saints before they are born of the Spirit. But it is not evident, that it is done in any higher degree in them, previously to their conversion, than in hundreds who have occasionally been convinced, but were never converted. Nor is it probable that their view of God, of Christ, of their own sin and ruin, bears any proportion in strength to that of those who have entered the world of despair. Here the knowledge of truth, the conviction of sin, and the pains of conscience, are complete. Indeed, it does not appear, that in the future state, there is any special difference between the righteous and the wicked, in the degree of their knowledge. But in the former, it is attended with love, and peace, and obedience, while in the latter, it awakens only rebellion, remorse, and shame.

5. Nor does spiritual understanding consist in any conceptions, or creations of the imagination, respecting God, Christ, heaven, or hell.

It has not been uncommon, in former generations, to find individuals whose imaginations were exceedingly fertile in these productions. Nor is it impossible to find those who now mistake their own imaginations for the

enlightenings of the Holy Ghost. Thus, men profess to have had a vision of God the Father, or of Christ on the cross, or coming to judgment, or of the Holy Ghost in the shape of a dove; to have heard him speak words of consolation, and say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." They profess to have been transported to heaven, in dreams or visions, and there to have seen the place prepared for their eternal abode; and in consequence of these and similar imaginations, they suppose themselves to have divine light and heavenly illumination. Now, nothing is further than this from the spiritual understanding which is given to the children of God; and nothing else more thoroughly places an individual at the disposal of Satan, than the substitution of his own thoughts and imaginations for the enlightening of the Holy Spirit.

II. But if spiritual perception and understanding consists in none of these things, in what, it will be demanded, does it consist?

To this I reply, it must be remembered, that the minds of men have always had the law of God before them. Hence, though the subject has always been in their sight, and in some respects apprehended, yet it has not been spiritually understood. And it is further to be remembered, that the truth itself, or the descriptions of spiritual things, undergo no change. What change is needed in the truth? Is it not now correct? Are not the descriptions in the word of God, respecting his character, his law, the character of the sinner, his duty, and the way of salvation, complete? What change, then, do they need? What change, indeed, can be produced in them, without rendering them both incorrect and untrue? There is no call, then, for the Spirit to operate on the truth, and fit it to be understood. The operation is needed only on the mind of the sinner.

The truth is right, and needs no change. The minds and hearts of men are wrong, and need to be renovated. Here, *then*, on the mind alone, the operation must be. Here the change needs to be produced. In this alone is there a call for renovation. God is right. He needs no change. Christ needs no change. The Holy Spirit needs no change. The Bible needs no change. The mind of a sinner alone needs it. The scriptures have been open to his view; they have been before his eyes; they have been falling on his ears; they have been presented in every attitude; and yet he has not a spiritual understanding of them. He has no just appreciation of the things which they unfold. The thing demanded by his necessities, in this respect, is such a change in his mind, that he shall spiritually understand and correctly appreciate the things of God. This change is wrought in every one who is born of God. In its nature, it bears almost the same relation to the spiritual man as the senses bear to the natural man. Indeed, the effects of this change in an immortal being, very much resemble that which is produced by the restoration of the senses to those who are deprived of them. Thus, the blind man walks amongst objects, knows that they exist, but has no just idea of their appearance. The deaf man lives amongst sounds, understands that there are modes of communication by the ear, but has no conception of the nature of sound. Hence, this subject is frequently and perhaps generally illustrated by imagery, borrowed from the eyes and the ears, from light and from sound.

The work of God, in giving spiritual understanding, is illustrated by his opening the eyes of the blind.

A remarkable instance occurs in the history of the Israelites. Moses, just previously to his death, "called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all

that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which thine eyes have seen; the signs and those great miracles; yet the *Lord* hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day." Here, then, it is affirmed, that the Israelites had seen all these wonderful works of the Almighty; as events produced by his immediate power, they had known them. But there was a respect in which, though these things had been transacted before their eyes, they had not perceived them. While, in a visible and tangible respect, they had distinctly marked all these occurrences, *in a spiritual respect they had not understood them.* But what reason does the prophet assign for this failure to perceive them? Simply, the Lord hath not given you eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day. In respect to this same blindness of the understanding, David prayed, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." Hence, also, it was predicted, of times of religious prosperity. Isaiah xxix. 18: "The eyes of the blind shall see, out of obscurity and out of darkness." And in Eph. i. 17, 18, Paul told the Ephesians, that he prayed "the Father of Glory to give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling." In these and many other passages, spiritual blindness is illustrated by natural blindness, and spiritual understanding by the giving of eyes, or the opening of those which have always been closed.

The communication of spiritual understanding is also illustrated by opening deaf ears, or giving ears to those who do not possess them. In Isaiah xlviii., God says to the children of Israel, "I have declared

the former things from the beginning;" "I have showed thee new things, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them;" "Yea, thou heardest not, yea, thou knewest not, YEA, FROM THAT TIME, THAT THINE EAR WAS NOT OPENED." Here God represents himself to have declared to them, things which pertain to his operations from the beginning; and yet they did not hear, because their ears were not opened. Now, could the whole nation of Israel have been naturally deaf? Who ever heard of such a defect in them? It is true, then, that this failure was owing altogether to their spirirual deafness. And the same difficulty is mentioned, Jer. vi. 10: "To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken." And, hence, when God renovates men, and causes them spiritually to understand his will, he commands, "Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears;" "In that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness."—Isaiah xxix. 18. "For then," saith Jehovah, Isaiah xxxv. 5, "*the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.*" Here it is evident, that the eyes of the natural understanding do not see the things of the Spirit, nor its ears hear those spiritual truths with which the scriptures abound; and hence, to produce this perception, it is requisite that these eyes and these ears should be opened. An immediate act of God on the mind is as requisite to produce spiritual understanding, as to open blind eyes, or unstop deaf ears.

Spiritual understanding is illustrated by the sense of tasting. Thus, in Psalms cxix., David says, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth; through thy precepts I get under-

standing, therefore I hate every false way." Thus, also, Peter says, "If so be, that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." Thus the spiritual understanding is illustrated in various parts of the scriptures, by the most useful and desirable of the senses; and the man who is destitute of it, is as poorly qualified to discern the things of the Spirit, as an individual without sight, or hearing, or taste, to ascertain by intuition the nature of objects around him. In consequence of its analogy to the senses in some of its operations, this spiritual understanding is frequently denominated, "A SENSE OF DIVINE THINGS." In its results it differs entirely from a mere opinion or judgment of the mind. There may be an opinion founded on the testimony of others, that light is pleasant; but of this pleasantness the blind man has no just conception. If sight is granted to him, he will find light to be widely different from any thing which he had ever conceived. The deaf man may form some idea of sound or melody, but if his hearing were granted, he would immediately discover, that he had no adequate notion of its nature or effects. The individual who has never tasted honey, may believe it to be sweet, but of the nature of this sweetness he has no knowledge. So of divine things. The natural man may believe them to be excellent and glorious, but of this excellency and glory he has no just conception. The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit. A sense of their superlative excellency and glory in the mind, is as certainly the work of God, as sight in the natural eye, or hearing in the natural ear, or tasting in its appropriate organ.

III. The production of this spiritual understanding in his people, is everywhere, in the scriptures, literally and immediately ascribed to the Almighty.

Here it is necessary to say, that the righteous are represented in the scriptures as having a sense of divine

things, an understanding of God, and Christ, and the way of salvation, to which the impenitent are entire strangers. Thus, the impenitent are declared to be in certain respects ignorant of God. 1 John iii. 6: "Whosoever sinneth, hath not *seen* him, nor known him." 3 John ii: "He that doeth good, is of God; but he that doeth evil, hath not seen God." With this ignorance of the ungodly, the knowledge of the righteous is frequently contrasted. Dan. xii. 10: "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." John xiv. 19: "The world seeth me no more, but ye see me." John xvii. 3: "And this is eternal life, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." This understanding by which the saints are distinguished from the impenitent, is the gift of God. For this David prayed, Psalms cxix. 34: "Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law." And the preacher says, Eccl. ii. 26: "For God giveth to a man, that is good in his sight, wisdom, and knowledge, and joy, but to the sinner he giveth travail." And Daniel ii. 21, declares, "He giveth wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding." Here, the wisdom of the wise, and the knowledge of those that have understanding, is attributed expressly to the gift of God. Nor is this mode of expression confined to the ancient saints. John, the beloved disciple, said, 1 Epistle v. 20: "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ." This saving appreciation of Jesus Christ is never had by the natural understanding. Though men are rationally convinced, that Jesus is the Christ, yet this fact is not savingly received, except

by those to whom this spiritual understanding is given. Hence, we see what the apostle meant, when he said, "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called (renewed), both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Only those, then, who were renewed, received this heavenly wisdom. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned."

There is also a numerous class of passages, which present the same view of the doctrine, under the image of light. As the eyes of the understanding are represented in the scripture as closed, and the individual as consequently walking in darkness, the opening of the eyes, or the gift of spiritual understanding, is represented by the giving of light. Thus, in Col. i. 12, 13, the apostle speaks of uttering "thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers with the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness," (ignorance,) "and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Eph. v. 8: "Ye were sometimes darkness," (spiritually ignorant,) "but now are ye light" (have spiritual understanding,) "in the Lord: walk as children of the light." And in 2 Cor. iv. 6, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." That this relates to some operation beyond the mere preaching of the word, is evident, from the admission of the apostle in this connexion, that the gospel was not received by some, because their minds were blinded. "For, if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath

blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Here, then, the failure to receive the gospel is explicitly declared to be the "blindness" of their minds; and this blindness is removed in those into whose minds God causes the light of his knowledge to shine, as quickly and immediately as the eyes, which have been always blind, are opened at his command.

From these general statements, which attribute the gift of spiritual understanding to God, we descend to those which are particular.

The first instance which I notice, is the memorable saying of our Lord, Matthew xi. 25–27: "At that time, Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father;" "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." He had here been speaking of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, in which most of his mighty works had been done, and *which, had they* been wrought in Tyre and Sidon, in Sodom or Gomorrah, would have brought even those wicked cities to repentance. But the wise and the prudent sons of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, did not receive the light of the glorious gospel of the Son of God. The prince of this world had blinded their eyes, and the gospel was hidden; and though God, in his holy sovereignty, did not see fit to open their eyes to behold this glorious light, yet he disclosed it unto others, who, in respect to carnal wisdom and prudence, were far inferior to them. Unlike many in modern times, the Saviour did not say, that God could not open the

eyes of these tall sinners, and that he opened as many as he was able to open. No such expression ever escaped from the Son of God. He does not even attempt to explain the fact, but says, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." He even intimates, that no such attempt was made to open their eyes, for he says, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, *save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*" Whether the eyes of any individual shall be opened, and *spiritual understanding* conferred upon him, depends altogether on the *will* of God.

The next instance is that of Peter. "When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the son of man, am?" Here it will be remembered, that these individuals probably knew the prophecies respecting the Messiah, and that they were personally acquainted with Jesus; and yet none of them believed him to be the Christ. With all these means of forming a correct view of the case, they mistook his real character; for the disciples replied, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets." Jesus again said to his disciples, "But whom say ye that I am?" And Simon Peter answered, and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God. And Jesus answered, and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Here it is evident, that Peter had come to a true knowledge of Christ, not by information received from others, for they did not know him, nor by his own natural observation, for flesh and blood had not disclosed this fact to him, but our Father who is in heaven. He

had unquestionably received from God the spiritual understanding, without which it is impossible to discern spiritual things.

But there is one instance still more instructive. After our Lord had risen from the dead, and thus had accomplished all that had been predicted of him, he met his disciples; he shewed them his hands and his feet; and while they believed not for joy, and wondered, he took food and ate it before them, and said unto them, concerning his own death and regeneration, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the scriptures."

This subject suggests, 1. The reason why those who have been newly born into the kingdom of Christ, seem to regard every thing as new, and feel themselves to be in a new world.

This is a general, if not an universal trait, in those who are created anew in Christ Jesus. Even natural objects seem to be clothed with a beauty and a lustre, which they had not before worn. The sun, moon, stars, and firmament, seem to have been newly garnished by the hand that made them. The clouds, the winds, the showers, the forests, and the fields, seem to have assumed an aspect entirely new. The character of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the divine law; the humiliation, sufferings, and death of Christ; the way of salvation; the joys of heaven and the sorrows of hell—all appear to be widely different from any thing which those who are newly born into the kingdom of Christ had ever conceived. But these things have undergone no change. The same sun shines, which shone in the days of their impenitence. The same glorious God reigns over the

universe. The same law exists. The same Saviour now gives repentance and remission of sins. The same Spirit now renews and sanctifies the children of men. Why, then, should all these things appear new? This is effected simply by a change in the hearts and understandings of those who are born of God. Once, when they gazed on the firmament, they contemplated nothing but its magnificence. Now, they regard it only as an illustration of the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of him who made it. Once, when they meditated on the attributes of God, their souls were awed into veneration, or penetrated by terror. Now, these feelings have departed, and an affectionate confidence and serenity have come in their place. Once, the perfections of the Almighty, as revealed in his word, were cold, distant, and sometimes terrific. Now, they are seen to be holy, lovely, and desirable above all things. Before this change, the law of God ordinarily seemed to consist only of a few general principles, which it were easy to keep; but now it seems to be spiritual and exceedingly broad. Before, when the Holy Spirit awakened the understanding, and excited the conscience, and caused the individual to see himself to be more sinful than he had ordinarily supposed himself to be, he was agitated. He hated the law and the lawgiver, and desired to be free from their restraint. Now, though he sees himself to be vastly a greater sinner than he formerly believed himself to be; though he sees that he is condemned by the law, yet he does not think, nor speak evil of the law. He regards it, like its Author, as holy, and just, and good. Once, he could not see its necessity, nor constantly feel under obligation to obey it. Now, he sees it to be essential to the highest good of the universe, and absolutely requisite as the guide of his life. It is a light unto his feet, and a lamp unto his

path. Once, he saw no beauty in Christ—no divine excellency in his condescension, sufferings, and death, for the sins of men. Now, this event is plainly understood to be not only necessary, but a most wonderful illustration of the mercy of the Lord, and worthy to be celebrated by all intelligent beings forever and ever. Formerly, he could see no need of the operation of the Holy Ghost on the hearts of men, to bring them into the kingdom of God. He supposed argument, and motive, and divine persuasion, to be enough to turn them from the error of their ways unto the wisdom of the just. Now, he knows, that unless the Lord had taken the stony heart out of his flesh, and given him an heart of flesh, and caused him to walk in his commandments, he would have wandered till he had been lost in the blackness of darkness forever. These and many other equally precious views are gained, not in consequence of a long train of reasoning, but they are perceived and discerned. As by the senses we arrive at the knowledge of things around us, without a process of reasoning, so this spiritual understanding discovers in the works and word of God the traces of his adorable majesty, consummate holiness, and infinite love. It sees the beauty and glory of divine things, and sends forth feelings of holy love and gratitude. Though, by a train of reasoning, the natural understanding may arrive at such opinions of the excellency of divine things, yet it has not a sweet sense and perception of their glory, but only a cold, distant, and inoperative belief of their existence.

2. The subject suggests, that persons of very limited capacities may have spiritual understanding.

This understanding is altogether special and peculiar. No increase of the natural understanding will ever produce it. Even though the intellect of a human being

could be enlarged, till it were as capacious as that of Satan, still it would not be spiritual understanding. It is not dependent on any degree of native talent, or acquired intelligence. Persons of the most ordinary capacities, and even those whom the scriptures denominate babes, are as often favored with spiritual understanding, as any other individuals. The apostle in 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, said, "For ye see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." But while spiritual understanding is a special qualification for the kingdom of heaven, it is not to be supposed that all who possess it, are qualified to be teachers of religion. The feeble in intellect, and even babes, may thus be favored by the Almighty; but this alone does not mark them out, and designate them as teachers of Christianity. There are other qualifications which are requisite to those who expound the will of the Lord; and unless these be superadded, no individual has a right to enter on the work of public instruction. But spiritual understanding, or a *sense* of the excellence of divine things, so far as it is requisite to salvation, God grants without regard to other qualities of the intellect; and in his abundant mercy and holy sovereignty, bestows them on men of ordinary capacities, perhaps, more frequently than on men of a higher order of mind.

3. The subject suggests, the importance of inquiring concerning the nature of our understanding in a spiritual respect.

There are men who, in their own experience, put darkness for light and light for darkness. "If the light that is in thee," said the Saviour, "be darkness, how

great is that darkness!" Thousands have risen up who professed to be internally illuminated by God, and to receive communications immediately from him, whose lives prove them to be gross deceivers, or grossly deceived. Whoever believes himself to receive new revelations from God, either in respect to the divine character, or the way of salvation, or the rules of duty, or his own prospects in life, or the world to come, ought to be admonished that he is subjecting himself to the control of Satan. *He* guides men by unwritten suggestions, because he dares not responsibly publish a system of rules for the lives of men. Hence, he approaches them by immediate suggestions, as the emergency of the case may require. But God has caused all things to be written by which he intends you shall regulate your lives. No new rule of duty, no new motive will ever be revealed in this world to the children of men. The opening of the eyes of the mind, and the giving of understanding, are only that you may see the truth, the excellency, and the glory of things revealed in the word of God. No other light except *this sense* of divine things, is ever to be expected by the children of men. No other will ever be given to them by God. If, therefore, your understanding of the revelation of God, and your sense of divine things, lead you to obey the written word, and thus to glorify God with your body, and with your spirit, it is good evidence that your light is from above. But if you are careless concerning the rules of the Bible, and are looking for new light, from whatever source you expect it to come, whether by illumination, or vision, or dream, or voice, or impulse, then it is painfully true, that the light that is in you is darkness!

4. No other knowledge is so pure and elevated as that which is thus acquired. It is not merely a philo-

sophical view of the existence, the attributes, and the perfections of the Almighty. It is a sense of his excellence and glory; a just and holy appreciation of his law; a true and sacred view of his government. It is pre-eminently desirable to make one wise unto eternal life.

5. No other knowledge is so capable of producing sacred joy. There is delight indeed in acquiring a knowledge of any important subject. But what are all the delights produced by an acquaintance with works of science, or taste, or imagination, compared with the knowledge of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, of the divine law, of redemption, of regeneration, and of the eternal world? It is a full view of these things, that fills all heaven with delight; and calls forth from the holy angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect in glory, perpetual notes of praise. It is a spiritual understanding—a holy sense of these things—that produces all the real joy that exists in this fallen world.

6. No other knowledge is so purifying in its influence. A spiritual understanding of the character of God, a holy sense of his presence, a sacred view of the character of Christ, a holy sense of the presence and work of the Spirit, a spiritual appreciation of the extent and spirituality of the law—all these things are pre-eminently calculated to excite the renovated heart to walk in the statutes and commandments of the Lord. Who, then, will not pray, "Give me understanding, and I shall live?" Who will not cry, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law?"

SERMON VIII.

THE RENOVATION OF THE HEART.

EZEKIEL xi. 19, 20.—"And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God."

THE heart of the children of men is by nature fully set to do evil. This trait is manifested in all its operations. While "A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things, an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things." The Saviour has told us what are the fruits of an unregenerate heart. In his description of the inner man by nature, he says, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." These things are here mentioned, to show that the heart is the source from which all evil proceeds. This is sometimes denominated the will. It puts forth two classes of actions. The first class is composed of feelings, or inclinations simply, which rise spontaneously in the mind whenever it considers any subject that may be presented to its view. These are *sometimes* denominated affections. Whenever, in view of any object, these inclinations, or affections, become so strong that the mind *is moved*, or *determined* to do, or not to do anything, then this determination of the mind is called a volition. The volitions, then, are produced and controlled by the feelings, or affections; while the

affections themselves, are not subject to the direct control of the volitions. Now, a new heart consists not in new resolutions. The Israelites at Mount Sinai, had formed solemn resolutions to serve God, and yet they had not new hearts. After hearing the ten commandments proclaimed by the voice of God from the top of the mountain, and being convinced that it was Jehovah himself who uttered them, they said, "Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say, and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, and we will hear it, and do it. And the Lord heard the voice of your words when ye spake unto me. And the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken unto thee. They have well said all that they have spoken. O, that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever." Here it is plain, that the Israelites had determined, or resolved to serve the Lord. But this resolution to serve him was not satisfactory to Jehovah. He knew that there was not such an heart in them that they would fear him and keep his commandments. And so little power had their resolutions over their affections, that within forty days, they made a golden calf, and fell down and worshipped it, and said, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of Egypt." So, little will a mere resolution, or purpose of the mind to serve God, avail to a renovation of the life. It was not only true of the ancient Israelites, that there was not such an heart in them that they would fear God and keep his commandments, but it was true also of the later Israelites, and of all generations of men. And hence, when Jehovah determines to bring individuals into his family, he says, "I will take the stony heart

out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God." The change which is here promised, relates to the seat of the affections. When this is changed by the power of God, the volitions or determinations of the mind, being dependent on the affections, are consequently changed. The only point to which our attention is called by the text is, THE RENOVATION OF THE HEART.

I. This is not effected by revealed truth.

It is not uncommon to hear the word of God described as competent to renovate the heart, and bring the whole man into cordial submission to God. But, however ample the scriptures in the instructions which they furnish; however much they abound with doctrines, and precepts, and motives; yet it is not true that the scriptures have power to renovate the heart. Through the operation of the Holy Spirit, they may enlighten the understanding, guide the conscience, and excite alarm in the bosom of the sinner; but they are not competent to renovate the inner man. Thousands who have diligently read them, who have been instructed and awakened by them, have died in their impenitence. No amount of knowledge of the things of God, either here or hereafter, will be sufficient to renew the heart. Men of most thorough acquaintance with the scriptures, die without reconciliation to God. And in eternity, the apostate angels, and the spirits of wicked men, have full knowledge of the character, law, and government of God; and yet their hearts are not renewed. In all periods of the church on the earth, it has been held by devout men, that neither moral suasion by men, nor by the Holy Spirit, renews the soul. And this is distinctly intimated by Paul, 1 Cor. xiii., "Though I have the

gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."

Nor is it effected by the heart itself. The opinion was long maintained by many errorists, and I know not as it is less common now than an hundred years ago, that the heart, or will, has power to determine its own actions. But this is altogether incompatible with sound philosophy, as well as with the scriptures. In the latter we are told, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." "They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh." "To be carnally minded is death:" "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: For it is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be. So, then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God." "No man can come unto me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him." And the apostle John said of those to whom Christ gave power to become the sons of God, that they were "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh." It is, then, established by the testimony of the apostles, and of Christ himself, that we are not made children of God by any act of our own unregenerate hearts. But it may still be said, that our affections may be changed and renewed by our volitions, or determinations. That it is only requisite to this change, that an individual form a strong resolution, or produce in himself a "fixedness of purpose." And thus his whole inner man will be subjected to the control of the Almighty. But is it not true, that the volitions have no direct control over the affections? Is it not true, that the affections control the volitions? Of what use, then, are determinations and purposes, to control and renovate the heart? Of what use are they to produce obedience, when the whole current of the affections is rushing against them with full power to sweep them away? Of what

use was the resolution of the Israelites, who purposed to do all the Lord should command, when there was not such an heart in them as to fear God and keep his commandments? Is it to be supposed, that an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, will thus bring forth good things? This is directly contrary to the word of God, and to the experience of every Christian. And it is an astonishing fact, that in those churches, and under those ministrations, where men are pronounced to be Christians, who have only resolved to be Christians, the great body of the converts are soon confessed to be a disgrace to religion. It is found, that the streams of depravity, which flow forth from the heart, quickly sweep away almost every vestige of resistance which mere resolutions to serve God can oppose to their course.

II. The renovation of the heart is effected by the *immediate power* of God.

This is manifest from the declarations of the scriptures.

The scriptures uniformly repel the idea, that our salvation is in any respect attributable to any thing else than the Almighty. Our regeneration is not of blood, "nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." In this passage it is evidently declared, that we are not Christians in consequence of descending from pious parents, nor in consequence of our own resolutions, nor in consequence of the resolutions and efforts of others, but exclusively of God. Christ said, "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be *all* taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." What, then, is it for God to draw an individual, according to this passage? Is it to place the scriptures within his reach, and to cause him to hear the invitations and promises of the gospel? If this be its meaning,

then it will follow, that all to whom the gospel thus comes, shall be saved; for it is said, "every man that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." But we know, that not all, who have the law and the gospel, come to Christ. Many in the time of Christ himself, rejected him, and died in their sins. In every age, many have refused to come to him that they might have life. The passage, then, cannot mean, "to draw men by the commands and promises," either of the law, or the gospel. What, then, does it mean? Does it mean the convincing operations of the Holy Spirit? This is impossible; for then it would follow, that all who are convinced of their sins come to Christ. But many grieve the Spirit, and perish. It must, then, mean something entirely different from teaching by the word, or awakening by the Spirit? These, when combined, often fail to bring the soul to Christ. It must relate to an operation, which infallibly brings every subject of it to Christ; and wherein can this drawing differ from the others, except by the immediate action of the Holy Spirit in renovating the heart. This meaning will manifestly accord with the passage in the prophet from which it is taken. In speaking of the prosperity of Zion, he says: "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." "In righteousness shalt thou be established." The drawing here mentioned is something entirely beyond the instruction of the scriptures, or the convincing operation of the Holy Spirit; and brings all its subjects to Christ. What can this be but an immediate exercise of divine power? In Ezekiel xxxvi. 25–27, Jehovah says to the Israelites, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. From all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a

new Spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Here the process is not the use of the law, to bring men to the Spirit, but the immediate and internal operation of the Spirit to bring men to the obedience of the law. The law is only the rule. It is only the guide of the way. It has no life. The life must be in the person who walks in the way described by the law. And, hence, Jehovah promises to take away the lifeless heart, or the heart of stone, and give an heart of flesh; and thus, by putting his Spirit in men, to cause them to obey. What, more positively than this, can indicate an immediate act of God in regenerating man? This act is the beginning of the work, which cannot terminate till the soul is made perfect in glory; and as such it is explicitly attributed to the Almighty. Phil. i. 6, the apostle says: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath *begun* a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ." And in 1 Cor. xii. 6, he declares, "There are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all." And, hence, he says of Christians, Eph. ii. 8, 9, 10: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast; for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God before ordained that we should walk in them." Here it is observable, that the introduction of men into the kingdom of Christ, their regeneration, and their possession of a new heart, are attributed expressly to the workmanship of the Almighty. They are represented, not as moved by moral influence, or human, or divine persuasion, to do the will of God;

but as created unto good works, which God had previously required us to perform. But lest any one should hesitate respecting the immediate operation of divine power in regenerating men, it is desirable to cite the words of Paul, Eph. i. Here he says, that he made mention of the Ephesians in his prayers. But what did he ask for them? Did he pray that they might see, that they were able to make new hearts for themselves? Did he pray, that they might cease to depend on the power of the Almighty, lest it should destroy all sense of moral obligation in them? No! Unlike many in modern times, Paul was not agitated, lest men should rely on the power of the Holy Ghost to regenerate and sanctify them. He thus prayed, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to-us-ward, who believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." The renovation of the *heart*, then, in the view of this inspired apostle, was comparable in its greatness to the resurrection of Christ. This power was immediate. It was great. To the minds of many it seemed incredible. By this act, the apostle shadows forth the power employed in our regeneration. In raising Christ, there was no moral power or persuasion. What influence could persuasion have, to bring to life and activity a cold and lifeless body? And what greater tendency has persuasion to take the stony heart out of our flesh, and to give us an heart of flesh, that we may walk in the statutes of the Lord?

It is manifest, 2. From the modes in which this work is illustrated in the scriptures.

1. Those who undergo this change are said to be born again. As being born constitutes an individual a member of the family of man, by nature; so to be born again, is requisite to constitute him a member of the spiritual family of Christ. But by what agency is an individual thus born into the kingdom of God? He is, by nature, alienated from God. "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh." No act of his own will, then, can bring him into the kingdom of God. And yet the Saviour has taught, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And that all men may know that this is effected, not by our own act, but by the Almighty, he also said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And when man marvelled at such a doctrine, and inquired, "How can these things be?" he did not recede from the position which he had taken, but said, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Had it been true, as many hold, that the Spirit converts men by "suasion," this could have been explained and understood. But the mode of his operation is entirely incomprehensible. Men are as incapable of understanding how these things can be, as they are of ascertaining whence the wind cometh, or whither it goeth. An operation of the Spirit by means, in the common use of this term, can be seen and understood. But an immediate act of divine power, like that in which the worlds were created, is altogether imperceptible. The creation itself was the only proof of the existence and exercise of this power. So, also, of him who is born into the kingdom of God. An effect is

produced in him, creating him anew unto good works; but of the manner in which this effect is produced, he knows no more than of the chambers from which the winds issue, or the abodes in which they lodge.

2. Those who undergo this change, are described as "created in Christ Jesus unto good works." The child of God is said to be a "new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Here is an undoubted reference to the original work, of forming man from the dust of the earth, and breathing into him the breath of life. As, in the beginning, man was created by the immediate power of the Almighty; and as this fact is so often referred to, for the purpose of illustrating the renovation of the heart, or the formation of the spiritual man, what other conclusion can we safely draw, except that the latter is accomplished by the same immediate power as the former? Man, even apostate man, has both a body and a soul, but he has no spiritual existence; and, therefore, he needs in this respect, a new creation by the mighty power of God. Hence, all who have a spiritual existence are distinguished in the scriptures by a phraseology, which denotes this new creation by the power of the Almighty. They are called, "his workmanship"—"new creatures"—"created after his image." They are said to become his spiritual children; not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. What, more clearly than this, can indicate the immediate exercise of divine, of Almighty power, in their regeneration?

3. The renovation of the heart is illustrated by the resurrection of the dead.

In various parts of the scriptures, the impenitent are represented as "*dead*"—"*spiritually dead*"—"*dead in trespasses and sins.*" As the body, when life departs, is cold, lifeless, motionless, and utterly incapable of

engaging in any of the transactions of this life, so the mind, which has no spiritual life, is utterly incompetent to perform the holy duties enjoined in the word of God. As the body, from which life has departed, has hands and feet, eyes and ears, and all the organs of man, and yet is unable to labor, to walk, to see, or to hear; so the mind, which is dead in trespasses and sins, has conscience, and reason, and affections, but it does not understand its own corruptions, nor discern the excellency of God, nor love him with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength. As the man whose natural life has departed, is incompetent to transact the affairs of this world; so he, who is spiritually dead, is incompetent to worship God in spirit and in truth. And though, in their nature, these things are entirely unlike each other, yet neither of them can be renewed without the power of God; and hence, the renovation of the heart is frequently illustrated by the resurrection from the dead. Hence, Paul confessed, Rom. viii. 2, "For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death." And he said to the Ephesians, Chap. ii. 1, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." And to the Colossians, Chap. ii. 13, "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened," (made alive,) "together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." And to the Ephesians, he said, Chap. ii. 4, 5, 6, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us," (made us alive,) "together with Christ," (by grace ye are saved,) "and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." What other operation of the Almighty so convincingly demonstrates the exercise of immediate power, as the resurrection of the

dead? And yet this exercise of his power is used to illustrate the work of regenerating men, and preparing them for the kingdom of heaven. Is not this change, then, effected by the immediate power of the Almighty?

It would be easy to show, that the work of regeneration is illustrated by many other transactions of a less prominent character, but all tending to produce the same conclusion respecting it. But these are sufficient to show by what the change is wrought. And as, in the scriptures, it is declared to be the giving of a new heart; as this change is effected by the exceeding greatness of God's power; and as it is illustrated by distinct reference to the birth of a human being, to the original creation of man, and to the resurrection of the dead; it cannot reasonably be doubted that the divine power is immediate and alone in the regeneration of man.

Here it will perhaps be objected, that regeneration is effected by *moral power* or *divine persuasion.* And it may be alleged, that the scriptures inculcate this doctrine; and that James declared, Chap. i. 18, "*Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.*" And this and its corresponding passages may be cited to show, that this work is effected by a species of divine persuasion. But here it is desirable to ask those who hold such views, whether the word of truth is anything else than the *rule* of duty, and the external motives to perform it? Whether it has not been before the minds of all men under the sound of the gospel, and yet many of them have not been converted? Whether it has not been before the minds of those who are eventually converted, and yet has never caused them *to obey?* Is it not true, that the word of truth is only a guide in the way to heaven; only a lamp to the feet, and light unto the path? And if it is only a guide, a lamp, a light—of what service can it be, except to those who are dis-

posed to walk according to its directions? Those who have a heart to do the will of God, the word of truth will guide and instruct in the service of Christ. But while it is conceded that the word is a perfect guide to salvation, it is also desirable to settle the question, whether the scriptures actually bring the hearts of men to a conformity with the Spirit, or the Spirit alone brings them to a conformity with the scriptures? That the scriptures have no power to renew the hearts of men, is implied in every part of the Bible. The scriptures, then, do not renew the hearts of men. On the other hand, *it is requisite* that their hearts be created anew by God, that they may obey the scriptures; and hence, Jehovah said, "*A new heart will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*" Then the new heart is a necessary prerequisite to obedience. After its renovation, the inner man delights to walk according to the word of truth. That the word of God is anything more than an instrument, by which the sinner, previously to his conversion, learns his true condition, and the saint ascertains the way to heaven, cannot be sustained by the scriptures. It is, indeed, a perfect guide, but it has no power to renovate the heart.

The subject suggests, 1. That it is altogether erroneous to deny the efficacy of divine grace.

That men may neglect to obey the word of God, no one can dispute. That they may resist, grieve, and quench the convincing influences of the Spirit, is too plain to admit a doubt. But who will dare to say, that when God undertakes, by the exceeding greatness of his power, to renew the heart of any individual, his counsel shall not stand? Is not the king's heart in the hand of the Lord? Doth he not turn it whithersoever

he will? Who, then, shall dare to say, that he cannot renovate the heart of any son or daughter of Adam? Does not he send forth his lightnings, and cause them to shine from one part under heaven unto the other; rending into a thousand pieces whatever resists their way? And is he unable in a moment to change the heart of so insignificant a being as man? Is not he, who opens the gates of death, and bids the dead bodies to come forth and live—is not he competent to raise our souls from death in trespasses and sins, and restore them to spiritual life? Is not he, who created the heavens and the earth, able in the twinkling of an eye, to create us anew in Christ Jesus? Even Nebuchadnezzar—heathen Nebuchadnezzar—said, "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" And how infinitely unworthy of God must it be, to conceive of him as unable to turn the hearts of men whithersoever he will. Far be it from us to cherish notions so utterly degrading to the High and Holy One. He, who in the beginning spake and it was done, can as easily and irresistibly renew the hearts of those who shall be the heirs of salvation.

2. This subject teaches us to be exceedingly humble.

There is sometimes amongst those who profess to be Christians, a disposition to feel, that they were converted by an act of their own will. It has been quite common in our generation to hear members of churches individually say, "I made up my mind to be a Christian:" "*I determined to serve God, and have ever since been a child of God.*" Now, if in these, or any other persons, there is no other change except that which is made by their own determinations, or resolutions, they are still without God in the world. Men become Christians,

not by the will of the flesh, nor of man, but of God. There is a real, a perceptible difference between a saint and a sinner. This difference is produced by the Holy Spirit. What, then, have Christians, which they did not receive? They are saved, not by their own will, but by grace through faith; and this not of themselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast; for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. It is God only, who maketh us to differ. Ought we not, then, to take an exceedingly low place before him, and to say, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name, give glory?"

3. The fact, that the renovation of the heart is the work of God, is a special encouragement to ministers in their work, and to Christians in their prayers.

The wickedness of individuals, and of communities, is sometimes so great, that it is difficult to believe they can ever be reclaimed. But the Lord's ways are above our ways, as the heavens are above the earth. Though we cannot reach and renovate the heart, yet the Lord can turn it as the rivers of water are turned. A prophet of the Lord was brought to a valley full of bones; and he passed by them and round about them. "And behold, there were very many, and they were very dry; and a voice said unto him, 'Son of man, can these dry bones live?' And he answered, 'O Lord God, thou knowest.' And the voice said again, 'Prophesy unto these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.' 'Thus saith the Lord unto these bones, behold I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.' And while he prophesied as he was commanded, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones

came together, bone to his bone; and lo, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army." Thus it is that the power of God brings men to spiritual life, and raises them up from their death in trespasses and sins, to eternal life.

4. It is evident, that if any impenitent individual of the human family shall be converted, it will be because God works in him both to will and to do that which, if left to himself, he would never will, nor do. The renovation of the heart is not of the will, nor of the flesh. Impenitent man never chooses to obey God, till he has been transformed by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. He never believes in Christ till his heart has been created anew; for the Saviour said, "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." Why, then, should not they who tremble in view of the end of their course, look up and rejoice that there is a God, who has chosen to rescue from eternal ruin a seed to serve him? And though this seed have not chosen him, yet he has chosen them, and by his mighty power will renew them, and bring them home to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy. This is the only redemption for those who are without hope and without God in the world. Cast yourselves, then, on the mercy of the Lord your God. And through grace may he save you, "by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."

SERMON IX.

EVANGELICAL FAITH.

JOHN vi. 40.—"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life."

I HAVE shown you, that the eyes of the natural understanding are closed in respect to spiritual objects. They do not discern the glory of the divine character, nor the spirituality of the divine law, nor the excellency of our Lord Jesus Christ. Of this the prophet Isaiah affectingly complained. He mournfully inquired, "Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He hath no form or comeliness, and when we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him." This is the state of all men previously to their regeneration. The eyes of their understanding are closed. But when men are created anew in Christ Jesus, the eyes of their understanding are opened. They behold the excellency of Christ. They see his glory. They gaze with astonishment and love on his perfections. They understand the way of salvation through him. Nor is this all. "He who shall inherit everlasting life, not only spiritually seeth the Son, but believeth on him." The nature and source of this belief it is my object to discuss.

I. ITS NATURE.

1. Evangelical faith is not merely a conviction, that all the things recorded in the gospel are true. This conviction of their truth is *commonly* called Historical Faith. The assent of the understanding to the verity of the statements in the scriptures, and especially to

those which respect the character of Christ, his incarnation, his sufferings, and his death, may be gained by evidence, exactly as our assent is gained to any other statement of facts. It is not uncommon to find individuals, and even whole communities, who as unwaveringly believe all the assertions of the scriptures, respecting God, and Christ, and the work of redemption, and the future world of rewards and punishments, as they believe the records of ancient or modern history. This occurred also under the preaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. For "when he was at Jerusalem, at the passover, in the feast day, many *believed* on his name, when they saw the miracles which he did; but Jesus did not *commit himself* unto them, because he knew all men." He did not recognise them as his disciples; because he saw that although they believed him to be the Christ, they had not the precious faith in him, as their wisdom, and righteousness, and redemption, which the system of salvation demands. Simon, the Sorcerer, having heard Philip preach the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, *believed;* "and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done." And yet he had neither part nor lot in the matter, for his heart was "not right with God." The same principle is manifest in those spirits, who are reserved in chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. They have a living conviction of the great truths of revealed religion. For the scriptures inform us, that the devils believe and tremble. To believe in Christ unto salvation, then, does *not consist merely* in our unwavering conviction of the truth, as set forth in the scriptures.

II. Nor does it consist merely in a *cordial* belief of these truths. To believe these truths, and to have even a love of them, is not evangelical faith. It is, indeed, a

trait of a holy being to receive the truth with love. But this is a widely different thing from faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Angels, whose holiness has been spotless, cordially believe the truth, rejoice in it, and have often been the cheerful messengers of God to bear it, and yet they have not evangelical faith. Though they love the work of redemption, and with notes of heavenly melody announced the coming of the Saviour, and ministered to him in the period of his temptation by the devil, and lingered around his sepulchre, and bore his ascending message to his disciples at Olivet; though they ministered to him on the earth, and worship him in heaven, yet they have not *evangelical faith*. There is a characteristic of this faith, which never found a home even in the bosom of an angel. Though they believed all the predictions of the Messiah, and understood the full object of his coming, and had ample confidence in him, as the Redeemer and Saviour of lost men, yet they have no need to receive him, and to rely on him for their *own salvation*, for they are just before God.

III. Nor did this faith dwell in our Lord Jesus Christ. He fully believed all the declarations of the Holy One of Israel. As a divine being, he knew them to be true; and as a human being, he cordially received them, and cherished them with unwavering attachment. For our Lord himself said, "The Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth." And he represented himself as loving the Father, and as delighting to do his will. He honored the truth of God, by cordially receiving, amply teaching, fully explaining, and earnestly pressing it home on the hearts and consciences of men. He honored the truth by obeying it, for he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; and yet our Lord, though cordially loving, and faithfully teaching, and fully obeying the revealed will

of God, never had evangelical faith; for he was not a sinner, and had no need to rely on the righteousness of another for salvation. Evangelical faith, then, differs from the full belief of the truth, as it exists sometimes in wicked men and devils; and from that cordial belief of it which exists in angels, and was found in our Lord Jesus Christ while on the earth. It *can* exist, indeed, only in those who have inherited the corruption and guilt of the fall, and are thus exposed to eternal ruin. And in each individual it has reference to relief, from the sinfulness in which man is involved, the removal of the sentence by which he is condemned, and his justification before the Holy One.

IV. To believe in Christ, then, is to receive him as he is offered to us in the gospel, and to rely on him alone for salvation.

This implies, that the stony heart has been taken out of the flesh, and an heart of flesh given. To believe in Christ, is not merely an assent of the understanding, but the cheerful reliance of the heart, on his righteousness and death, and intercession for salvation. The heart is properly the seat of evangelical faith, for "*with the heart*, man believeth unto righteousness." The reception of Christ, as its righteousness and redemption, was never performed by an unregenerate heart. And hence, the idea, that the reception of Christ is a preliminary to regeneration. And the reason why God looks favorably on a sinner, and renews his heart, is utterly unfounded.

To receive Christ, and rely on him alone for salvation, implies, an abandonment of all reliance on ourselves; a relinquishment of all expectation of relief, by virtue of any natural goodness, or recuperative power within our own bosoms; a rejection of all confidence in our repentance, or even in our faith itself, as a ground of

our justification in the sight of God; and a deep and abiding persuasion that we are utterly vile, and neither have, nor can have of our own inherent qualities, or external doings, anything which will move the Almighty to receive us, or be a ground of our reception by him. It implies, a thorough persuasion that we must be saved by grace through faith; and this not of ourselves; "it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." It implies, a living conviction that we are utterly unrighteous, and loathsome in the sight of God, and shall forever continue to be so, unless he shall apply unto us the righteousness of Christ; and that we shall be forever under condemnation, and liable to eternal death, unless the death of our Lord Jesus Christ be accepted in its stead.

The eyes of the understanding being opened, now behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. In him, they see all those qualities which the poor lost soul pre-eminently needs. In him, they see the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. In him, they behold "the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." In him, they behold one on whose vesture, and on whose thigh a name is written, "King of kings and Lord of lords;" whose power is adequate to repel every enemy, and to conquer even the rebellious heart of man; to rule the hearts of his people, and to subdue them wholly to himself, and to make them his cordial servants. In him, the penitent children of men see one who, however infinitely glorious, became flesh, and in his own life, which was holy, harmless, and undefiled, wrought out a perfect righteousness for his saints, and held it forth for their acceptance. They see him, who occupied the place of his people, and endured the curse of the law, being made a curse for them. They see him,

who was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities; on whom the chastisement of our peace was laid, and by whose stripes we are healed; who bore our sins in his own body on the tree, and redeemed us by his blood. They see him, whose wisdom is infinite, and whose prerogative it is, by his Spirit, to enlighten his people in the great and spiritual things which pertain to their salvation. They behold him, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. And whilst they gaze on this wondrous manifestation of divine love; whilst they are contemplating the marvellous provision for the redemption of fallen man, so suited to all the exigencies of this ruin by the apostacy, their renewed souls are encouraged to hope for salvation, through his righteousness, and death, and intercession. This glorious Saviour, with all the blessings procured by his death, is freely offered to them in the oracles of God. And they are there invited, saying, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, let him come and buy wine and milk, without money and without price." "The spirit and the bride say come, and let him that heareth say come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him come and take the waters of life freely." "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayst be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayst be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayst see." "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "And this is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life."

Deeply impressed with the truth of these offers of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of salvation through him, the soul accepts the righteousness of Christ, and relies on *it* for the favor of God, as securely, as if *it* had been wrought with its own hands. It accepts the sufferings and death of the Saviour, and relies tranquilly on them as a full satisfaction of the violated law and injured justice of a holy God. It accepts Christ as its wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; and glories not in its own works, for these are utterly loathsome; but only in the Lord, its righteousness and strength.

Now, this simple reception of the righteousness, death, and intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ, and this reliance on him for salvation, is evangelical faith.

II. But what is the source of this faith?

It has been so common, in our day, to speak lightly of the origin of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, that correct views on this subject seem almost to have departed from amongst men. Indeed, it has been preached and published extensively in our generation, by such as professed to be better teachers of Christianity than almost any others since the apostles, that there was great difficulty in the time of the Messiah and his disciples, in bringing men *to believe him to be the Christ.* And hence, it was then necessary for preachers, and even for the Holy Ghost, to *strive* with men, to bring them to an *admission of this truth.* And it has been strongly intimated, that in this period of the world, in this age, PROFANELY CALLED "THE AGE OF LIGHT," there is no need of even directing men to believe in Christ. And whilst some have thus toiled, evidently to undermine the whole doctrine and duty of faith in Christ; others suppose it to be simply an act of the natural mind, giving its assent to the things revealed in the scriptures respecting Christ.

Now, though the word of God explicitly commands us to believe in Christ, and also declares, that he that believeth not shall be damned, yet it plainly teaches, that "faith is the gift of God." In Eph. ii. 8, the apostle says; "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." But what does he here mean to say, is the "gift of God?" He certainly does not mean to affirm, that we are saved by the grace of God. This he had already said in this same passage. He had already declared, "For by grace are ye saved;" and to this he adds, "*through faith;*" and *that* not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. He here declares, not only that we are saved by grace, but that the faith also by which we receive this salvation, is not of ourselves, but the gift of God. In Hebrews, xii. 2, Jesus Christ is said to be "the author and finisher of our faith." He produced it in us, and he will carry it forward to its perfection. In John vi., Evangelical faith is described by coming to Christ, which is its correlative phrase. And Christ here says, "No man can come unto me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him. It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." "Therefore said I unto you, no man can come unto me, except it were given him of my Father." "And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." *To come to Christ*, in these passages, is to *believe* in him, or to have "*Evangelical Faith;*" and no one can thus come to him unless drawn by God. This faith, then, is the gift of God. This view of the source of faith is found also in all other parts of the scriptures. Especially does it stand forth conspicuously in the prayers of the apostles and other saints. Paul said to the Thessalonians: "Wherefore, also, we pray always

for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness and the WORK OF FAITH with power." In Luke, the disciples are recorded to have prayed, "Lord increase our faith." And in Mark, a father, who brought his son to be healed, is described as praying to Christ, and saying, "Help thou mine unbelief." And Paul said to the Philippians: "Unto you it is *given* in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Evangelical faith, then, is the gift of God.

This view of the subject has been maintained by the church in all periods. Whatever may have been true of some adventurers in theology, during periods like our own; of departure from the right ways of the Lord; it is a fact, that genuine saints, *so far from regarding faith as the fruit of their own efforts*, uniformly attribute its production to the operation of the Holy Ghost. Hence, it is always denominated A GRACE. This term is used to denote those spiritual gifts which God confers upon his people. So thoroughly has the church been convinced, that faith is the gift of God, as to perceive the propriety of denominating it A GRACE, and to concur in calling it by a name which unequivocally implies its production by the Almighty. In nothing else has there been a greater harmony amongst Christians, than in their utter rejection of the theory, that faith is the work of man, and that on its exercise by a fallen son of Adam, depends his regeneration, sanctification, and salvation. In nothing else has there been greater union than respecting the doctrine, that this is the grand reason why God looks with favor on one impenitent sinner, and adopts him, whilst he leaves those who do not possess it, to perish in their sins. It is an affecting truth, that evangelical faith is never found in an impenitent individual. It exists only in those who are regenerated.

In these there is a *new heart*. The new heart has a spiritual fitness to believe on Christ. *This fitness* to repent and believe—this aptitude to receive Christ in all his offices—is called a *divine principle*. This name is used to distinguish it from the *natural* principle, or *source* of its feelings and actions. The *natural principle*, or source, brought forth only sin, impenitence, and unbelief. The *divine principle*, or source, produces holiness, repentance, and faith. This new state of the heart is also sometimes denominated a *habit*, not to denote that the heart has been *accustomed* to exercise faith and other Christian graces, but to imply a *fixed* condition—a *habitus*—or CONSTANT APTITUDE, for believing in Christ, and relying on him for salvation. This *fitness*, or, as it is sometimes called, this *divine principle*—this *constant aptitude*, or, as it is at other times called, this *habit*, to believe in Christ, is produced in man by the Holy Spirit in regeneration, in taking the stony heart out of his flesh, and giving him an heart of flesh. It is produced by creating him anew in Christ Jesus. And thus, faith, as a *principle* of the mind, is the *gift of God*, and all the *acts of faith* are also *dependent* on him. Hence, the disciples prayed, "Lord *increase* our faith." Hence, all genuine saints pray, Lord increase our faith—increase all our Christian graces. This prayer would be utterly inappropriate on any other ground than a recognition of the interposition of the Almighty in giving and strengthening faith. It has, then, the consent of the church that it is the gift of God.

Now, if evangelical faith consists merely in receiving Christ, and relying on him alone for salvation; and if it is the gift of God, then it follows, I. That we are not saved by works.

There is a prevailing propensity in men to attribute their salvation to something which their own hands

have done. So unconquerable is this tendency, that no persuasion will induce an individual to abandon the expectation of relieving himself from eternal ruin. But according to the true meaning of the scriptures, there are only two prominent parts in this great work. The first consists in providing and offering a Saviour. The second consists in evangelical faith. Which, now, of these is the work of man? No man ever maintained, that he had provided a Saviour. All unite in ascribing to Jehovah the glory of giving his only begotten, and dearly beloved Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Nor yet is faith itself the work of man. So far from it, that this grace is an utter renunciation of all works as a ground of salvation, and a reception and a reliance on Christ, as our righteousness, and redemption, and salvation. For the "righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe." * * * "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." And even this faith itself is wrought in us by the power of the Almighty. "Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay; but by the law of faith."

II. The subject suggests the inquiry, "Do we not make void the law through faith?"

God forbid, that from the doctrine of Faith we should draw a conclusion so utterly subversive of Christianity. Nay, we establish the law. By the reception of Christ, as his righteousness and redemption, the renewed man acknowledges his obligation to keep the law; and his just exposure to its penalty. Nor, in consequence of having received Christ, does he suppose himself released from obligation to obey it. The stony heart has been

taken out of his flesh, and an heart of flesh given him; not that he may set the law at defiance, but that he may walk in all its commandments. It was one grand design of God, in renovating him, that he should be disposed to obey the law. And when it was demanded, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" the apostle replied, God forbid. "How shall we, who are dead to sin, continue any longer therein?" To continue in sin, is entirely incompatible with the renovated heart. It is as impossible for it now to set aside the law of God, as the rule of its life, as it once was to obey it. The faith, which does not produce works of obedience, is dead. It is merely speculative. It proceeds from the intellect alone. It springs not from the heart. Though works are neither the ground, nor the occasion of justification, yet evangelical faith will produce good works. It will produce holy obedience to the law, as certainly, as natural life will cause the heart to beat, the blood to circulate, and the limbs to move. A faith in Christ, which does not produce these effects, is in no respect superior to that of devils, for they believe. But they do not obey. They tremble, but they do not keep the divine commands. Thus, instead of making void the law, by faith we establish it.

III. The subject suggests, that all those views of evangelical faith, which include inspirations, revelations of future events, and visions, are utterly erroneous.

Evangelical faith, is simply receiving and relying on Christ for salvation, as he is offered in the gospel. It does not imply, that any information will be given respecting Christ, except that which is recorded in the scriptures. Indeed, no other information concerning him is needed, and no other will be communicated. It is not the reception of Christ as he may be offered unto us, but as he *is set before our minds* in the gospel. Nor have

we any reason to believe that to those who rely on him, a revelation is made that they are the children of God. Their evidence of being born into the family of Christ, consists merely in their consciousness of receiving and resting on him alone for salvation. The tendency of this faith to produce universal obedience to the divine commands, in connexion with the other Christian graces, is their only reason for the hope that is in them. Sanctification has always been regarded as the only evidence of justification. Nor is this evidence ever given by inspiration, by impulse, or by vision. There is no authority in the scriptures for making these things a ground of confidence, that we are accepted by God. Against all these things we are solemnly warned by Jehovah himself. And the experience of all past ages has shown, that those who rely on these things, shall utterly perish. The experience of the present generation, has abundantly shown, that they who have given themselves over to such superstitions, quickly make shipwreck of the faith, and often of their own understandings; for many of them have wandered about as the most fearful of lunatics. Evangelical faith never pretends to the knowledge of any other fact or truth, but those which are recorded in the scriptures. It pretends not that God has revealed anything to it. It pretends not that the Holy Ghost has committed to it any knowledge, either by inspiration, or impulse, or dream. It pretends not that the degree of its own strength is evidence, that God is about to manifest himself gloriously in the salvation of others. Of all the things which God is about to do for his own glory, for the salvation of sinners, or for the chastisement of the ungodly, he who has saving faith, is as profoundly ignorant as others. He differs from the world around him, not in speculative knowledge, but in receiving

Christ, and resting on him alone for salvation. This is the whole work of evangelical faith; and he whose faith differs so widely from this, as to comprehend impulses, and visions, and partial inspirations, is probably in the way to hell.

IV. The subject suggests, that to believe in Christ, is the great duty of lost men.

By the deeds of the law, no flesh shall be saved. All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. All are under condemnation. All are hastening to the place of eternal punishment. Of his own infinite mercy, God has adopted a remedial system. He has sent his Son into the world, to suffer and die; that whosoever believeth in him, may not perish, but have everlasting life. This saying is worthy of all acceptation. It is the prominent truth of revealed religion. I delivered unto you first of all, said the apostle, I delivered unto you as of the highest importance, that which I also received; how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. This glorious truth is amply inculcated in the gospel. This glorious Saviour, from the power and the punishment of sin, is preached; and poor, condemned, lost sinners, are invited to believe. They are commanded to believe. All the authority of the Father, is used to require their belief. All the loveliness of the Son, is set forth to invite their confidence in him. The Holy Ghost, also, convinces the impenitent of sin, because they believe not on Christ. Lost, forever lost, as to salvation by the law; and having no other remedy but Christ; urged by all the authority of the Father; persuaded by the loveliness of the Son, and convinced by the Spirit, of the sinfulness of rejecting him, his great duty is, to receive Christ, and to rest on him alone for salvation. The glory of God requires it. The honor of Christ requires it. The convincing

operations of the Holy Spirit require it. The eternal welfare of the sinner requires it. So pre-eminent is this duty, that it is declared to be the work of God, to believe in him whom he hath sent. To-day, then, by the authority of heaven, we preach unto you Christ, and him crucified. And we entreat you to believe in him, that your souls may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

5. Evangelical faith is the distinguishing feature of a child of God.

"He, that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life. There is, then, no condemnation to them, that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, is to have a title to everlasting life—to be free from the condemnation of the law—and to have a right to the tree of life.

But "he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, (this enhances the condemnation,) that light has come into the world; and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." All, then, who have not evangelical faith, are already condemned. They have not accepted the divine remedy. They are hastening on to the world of retribution, where, in addition to their numerous violations of the law, they must suffer the consequences of rejecting the remedy which God has provided for them: And if "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses, of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God; and hath counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing; and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace?"

SERMON X.

REPENTANCE.

JEREMIAH xxxi. 19.—"Surely after that I was turned, I repented."

THE great body of men are disposed to calculate on obtaining eternal life, by some efforts which their own minds may put forth. Even though they may not expect to be justified, on the ground of their own obedience to the law, yet they have a full persuasion, that by their own unaided faculties they can come to Christ, repent of sin, and bring themselves within the prescriptions of the covenant, which is well ordered and sure. This confidence in their own ability, leads them to live without concern and without effort. What more deadly influence can be poured on a world, lying in wickedness and delighting in iniquity, than to communicate the persuasion, that in any day of calamity, or in an emergency of wo, or even in the approach of death itself, man, in one short breath, and by one momentary and unaided effort, may secure eternal life? What more ruinous persuasion can be conveyed to lost men, than to tell them that at any future moment on which they shall fix, it will be certain that they will find God? The doctrine, that men are competent at any coming moment, to repent, to believe, and to secure their own salvation, has proved to be the ruin of thousands. Why, on these grounds, should they now cry to God for pardon, for renovation, and for faith in our Lord Jesus Christ? This presumption seems to be *founded* upon confused views of the work of the Spirit in regeneration. It assumes, that a man can repent, yes, that he does

repent, previously to his renovation by the Holy Spirit, and that this repentance is the reason why he is regenerated. But all unregenerate men are impenitent men. If this be not true, it will follow, that an individual may be, at the same time, both penitent and impenitent, both a believer and an unbeliever. All the sorrow for sin, which is found in the bosom of the impenitent; is the sorrow of the world, which worketh death. This sorrow ordinarily has reference to the immediate or the remote consequences of their transgression. Thus, in view of the punishment he had incurred by the murder of his brother, Cain mourned, and said, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid, and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me." Thus, Ahab, who, after the murder of Naboth, was told by the authority of God, "In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine;" and "The dogs shall eat Jezabel by the wall of Jezrael." *Thus, Ahab,* after hearing this premonition of terrible wrath, "rent his clothes, and put sackcloth on his flesh, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went softly." Thus, Judas, who betrayed Christ, "When he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood; and he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed—and went—and hanged himself."

Thus, in the bosoms of the impenitent, there may be the most acute sorrow for the consequences of their transgression, and also for the transgression itself, without genuine repentance. Indeed, there is reason

to believe, that after men are given over to hardness of heart and blindness of mind, this sorrow may be overwhelming, as well as in the world of wo. Yet, however great the agony of these and other wicked men may have been in this life, on account of their sins, it is true, that they never repented in the sense in which this duty is required of man. Their sorrow is like unto the agony of the ungodly at the day of judgment, and to that of the spirits in the world of wo. No sorrow on account of sin is acceptable in the sight of God, and gives a title to eternal life, except that which proceeds from *a renewed heart.*

"*Surely after that I was turned, I repented.*"

This subject is one of immense practical importance. In discussing it more amply, I shall endeavour to show, I. That repentance is an abiding characteristic, or principle of the new heart.

The prominent principle of the carnal heart is impenitence. That this impenitence is a trait of the heart itself, and not merely an act of the heart, is intimated in various expressions of the scriptures. Thus, in Rom. ii. 5, God addresses the wicked: "But after thy hardness and *impenitent* heart." Thus, also, in various other passages, he speaks of the hardness of their hearts. This impenitence and hardness are not the characteristics of the actions, but of the heart itself. They indicate the nature of the source from which wicked acts proceed. So, also, penitence has reference to the state of the soul itself. Thus, the carnal heart is *hard.* The renovated heart is *contrite.* The carnal heart is *impenitent.* The renewed heart is *penitent.* Thus, the sacrifices of God, (that is, the offerings with which he is pleased,) are a *broken spirit.* "A *broken* and *contrite heart,* O God, thou wilt not despise." These terms denote, not an *act,* nor a *series of actions,* but a *permanent state* of

the heart. Though we sometimes speak of an impenitent man, yet we have reference to the state of his heart. A greater absurdity never was committed, than to speak of an impenitent action—a broken action—a contrite action. Nor is the absurdity in the least degree diminished, by substituting volitions or exercises, for actions, and saying, an impenitent volition or exercise, a broken volition or exercise, a contrite volition or exercise. An adaptation of the scriptures to the modern theories of repentance, would turn the oracles of God into the most profound nonsense. The very idea of an impenitent volition, or a contrite exercise, is a manifest absurdity. The heart itself is, by nature, impenitent. It has a natural fitness to sin, without shame or ingenuous sorrow. The heart itself, by grace, is penitent, broken, contrite. It has a fitness to repent, an aptitude to mourn ingenuously over sin. This is a permanent principle, or source of sorrow for sin, and of turning from it unto holiness.

II. Repentance is the gift of God.

This is intimated in the text. "Surely after that I was turned, I repented." There is, however, a strong persuasion in the natural heart, that by its own *efforts* it can see its sins, mourn over them, and turn from them. There is a deep and reigning conviction in the impenitent, that by calling their sins to remembrance, and meditating on them, and considering their impropriety, their enormity, and their criminality, they can awaken penitence in their own bosoms, and bring themselves to the favor of God. And though they may not accomplish all that the gospel requires, yet by their own strength they can approach so near, that Jesus will see their struggles, and be unwilling to cast them away. They believe, that by succeeding struggles they may place their feet on the threshold of heaven, and may

even knock at the door; and thus, by their own carnal hearts, nearly complete the work of qualifying themselves to dwell with the holy angels, and with the spirits of just men made perfect in glory. But so far is this from being true, that no emotion of godly sorrow ever flowed from an impenitent heart. There may reign in it, indeed, a sorrow of the world, which worketh death —a sorrow which needeth to be repented of, and which maketh ashamed. But this is widely different from the "godly sorrow, which worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." This repentance is given by our Lord Jesus Christ. Peter and the other apostles explicitly told the council of the Jews, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree; him hath God exalted, with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins." When Peter rehearsed to the apostles at Jerusalem, the dealings of God with Cornelius and other Gentiles, and told them the operations of his grace, in bringing these foreigners into fellowship with the saints, "they glorified God," saying, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Nor was this doctrine a new one in the time of the apostles. It was familiar even to the prophets. For by Zechariah, Jehovah sent a message to his people, saying, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look on me, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son; and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." These passages distinctly show, that repentance is the gift of God. The unseen hand, which renovates the heart, prepares it to receive Christ, and rest on him alone for salvation, and also to mourn with bitterness

over all its transgressions. This state of the mind is altogether new to those who are brought into the kingdom of God. It is a condition of which, in the days of their impenitence, they had not even a conception; and so important is this new state of the mind to every immortal being, as to require a specific description.

This will comprehend several particulars. Of these I mention, 1. The mind, to which God has granted repentance unto life, has a just sense of its sins.

It is an affecting truth, that by nature we are children of wrath. "By one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin." "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all to condemnation." Nor are the human race involved merely in the sin, but also in the corruption of the fall. Hence, our own nature is corrupted. This corruption of our nature is mournfully acknowledged by David: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." It is also declared by Christ and the apostles: "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh." The carnal mind, (the mind of man by nature,) is enmity against God, not subject to his law. Of this depravity of his nature, the penitent soul is most affectingly conscious. There are, indeed, many who declare, that all sin consists in voluntary acts. But, is there nothing sinful in such a blindness of the understanding, that it cannot discern the things of the Spirit? Is there nothing criminal in having a carnal mind, which is enmity against God? Is there nothing unholy, in having not only a mind, but even the conscience defiled, so that it does not faithfully decide between good and evil? Although pretended metaphysicians may argue that nothing is sinful, except the voluntary acts of the mind, yet it is hard to convince the penitent man, that there is no sin in having the eyes of his understanding spiritually blind, and the

heart spiritually corrupt, and the conscience spiritually defiled. These corruptions he distinctly sees. Their existence, he mournfully acknowledges in his confessions before God. On no acts of his life, does he meditate with so deep a sense of sinfulness, as on the state of his soul. This was a characteristic of the ancient saints. They did not limit their confessions to the sinfulness of their voluntary deeds, but comprehended themselves. Thus, Job mournfully said, "Behold *I* am vile." "I abhor myself." Thus, Paul confessed the corruption not merely of his actions, but of himself, and said, "The law is spiritual, but I am carnal." Thus, also, the saints of our own age daily confess the blindness of their minds, and the hardness of their hearts. Of these, they have a far more affecting sense, than of the criminality of their deeds. And hence, their cry for the pardon of these internal sins, is as loud and as earnest, as for any of the voluntary deeds which they have committed. These things plainly evince, that genuine saints are deeply conscious of the sinfulness of their nature, and that this enters deeply into their estimate of the things whereof they ought to repent before God.

Nor is this all. Besides the sinfulness of his nature, the penitent man sees that his violations of the law of God, have been exceedingly numerous. These consist in doing many things which Jehovah has prohibited, and in neglecting to do many things which he has required. In addition to the corruption of his whole nature, he clearly understands, that his life has been one unbroken career of violating the law of God. He sees, that he has not loved God with all the heart, nor his neighbor as himself; and that even in those acts which may have appeared to men to be acts of obedience, he has not sought to glorify God with his body

and spirit. He understands, too, that he has often rejected Christ, who is offered to him in the gospel, and that he has grieved the Holy Spirit; and thus has been adding sin to sin, and treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. This is the view, which the enlightened understanding of a penitent man has of his sin. And it fully accords with all the representations of the scriptures.

And there is also one other characteristic of the penitent man. He not only sees that he is a sinner, but he also understands, that he is exceedingly vile, and odious in the sight of God. Whilst it is difficult for an impenitent man to see the sinfulness of his nature, the renewed man not only beholds his corruption, but knows it to be loathsome in the eyes of a holy God. He sees himself to be "wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." And whilst he mournfully surveys the loathsomeness of his nature, he is also deeply affected by the odiousness of his acts in the sight of the Holy One. And when he meditates on the whole course of his life, and regards it as a reality, that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart has been only evil *continually*, and every emotion and affection utterly sinful, and every deed utterly abhorrent to the nature of a holy God; when the penitent man sees all this, O how is his soul overborne with shame! How vile in the view of God does he seem to himself to be! How worthy of nothing, but exclusion from the presence of God, and the glory of his power!

2. Another trait of the mind to which God has granted repentance, is an appreciation of his mercy through Christ. That God is merciful, no one pretends to dispute. This glorious attribute of the divinity, is

clearly revealed in the oracles of God. It stands forth in every part of the scriptures, as the sun in the heavens. And, although man in his natural state, has always heard the proclamation of this mercy, yet he has never apprehended it. Though he has often been told, that we may be saved through Christ; that in him we have redemption through his blood, and the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, yet he has not appreciated this most cheering declaration of heaven. But now, the eyes of his understanding being opened, he seeth the Son, and believeth in him, and receiveth him as his wisdom, and righteousness, and redemption, and begins to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And as he gazes on the perfections of Jehovah, and meditates on his holiness, his justice, and especially his mercy, in preparing a Saviour for a being so utterly vile; and giving his only Son, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, to suffer and die for his redemption; and in giving the Holy Spirit to convince him of sin, and righteousness, and judgment; to take the stony heart out of his flesh, and to give him an heart of flesh; to open the eyes of his understanding, and to purge his conscience from dead works, to serve the living God,—as he gazes on these things, and meditates on this transcendent manifestation of mercy to a world lying in wickedness; and to a soul so surpassingly vile as he esteems himself to be, he loathes himself, he abhors himself, he smites on his breast. He mourns over the corruption of his nature. He mourns over the whole course of his life. The depravity of his inner man, the alienation of his heart from God, the flowings forth of this depravity in an unbroken career of unholy thoughts, in a constant though uneven, and sometimes turbid action of evil affections, and in one perpetual course of unholy words

and deeds. This is genuine penitence. Thus it is described by Jehovah, "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good; and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel." And David confessed, and said, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold thou desirest truth; in the inward parts, and in the hidden parts thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me." "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me."

3. Another characteristic of the penitent man is, that he turns from sin.

It is common, indeed, with the impenitent to turn from a sin which exposes them to the reproaches of conscience, or to the censures of men; but they rush directly and immediately into another. In every case of reformation, where the heart of the individual is not renewed, nothing occurs but the abandonment of one sin for the adoption of another. In some, the new sin is equally visible and flagrant. In others, it is comparatively secret. But in all, it is only the exchange of one sin for another.

Not so with the genuine penitent. He loathes all sin. He hears the voice of the Lord, saying, "Repent and turn"—"Turn away your faces from all your abominations." And though like the remnant of the heathen in the land of Canaan, after the children of Israel entered

it, the remains of his evil propensities rise, and the flesh lusteth against the spirit, yet he does not yield his members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yields himself unto God, as one that is alive from the dead, and his members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Although he is not under the law, as the arbiter of his eternal destiny, but under grace, sin is not suffered to have dominion over him. Being made free from the power of sin, he has his fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. And if, at any time, he sees another law in his members, warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin, which is in his members, he cries, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Though other lords have had dominion over him, yet he now turns to God as his King and his Ruler. Though he has been subject to the law of sin and death, he now loves the law of the Lord, and walks in his statutes. Though he has rejected Christ, he now abhors his unbelief; and cleaves to him as his Redeemer and portion. Instead of resisting the Spirit, he now prays and even sighs for his operation on his soul. The service of God, instead of being irksome, is his delight; sweeter to his taste than honey, or the honey comb. Nor is this a partial obedience. Though not perfect, it is universal in its nature. Nor does it result from a determination, which the penitent man has formed. It is the tendency of his soul. It is the propensity of the heart, renovated by grace. It is not a resolution of the mind like that of the Israelites at Mount Sinai, but a full purpose of the heart.

4. Another particular in this state of the penitent man, is a constant endeavor to obey God.

Though the penitent man knows, that by his own natural strength he cannot obey God, and that it is not

possible, according to the provisions of the gospel, that he should become perfect in this world, yet the rule of his life requires him to love the Lord with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself. The example, which he is required to imitate, is perfect. And, therefore, he strives to walk even as our Lord Jesus Christ walked. He presses toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He has a new and holy principle of obedience. He is influenced by motives which, in the days of his impenitence, had no control over him. He is no longer seeking merely his own gratification, but is anxious to glorify God with his body and spirit. He has read, that "The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men—teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and wordly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." With this object of the sufferings and death of Christ in distinct view, and aided by the purifying operations of grace, he carefully walks in all the statutes and ordinances of God. A process of conformation to the image of Christ, brings him daily nearer in spirit to the great pattern of holiness, and causes him to strive with new strength to obey the commands of the Almighty. Thus, he grows in grace. Thus, his obedience is continually becoming more pure and acceptable. Thus, walking in the statutes of the Lord, the penitent man is maturing for Zion above.

III. What are the evidences of repentance unto life?

There are individuals, who seem to suppose, that a serious attendance on the duties of private and public prayer—a diligent reading of the scriptures—a reverent

hearing of the word—and a celebration of the ordinances appointed by God—are an evidence that they are born of the Spirit. This conclusion, respecting themselves, is strengthened by a feeling of attachment to these things; which differs not in its nature from the patriotism that dwells in every worthy son of his country. This is ample evidence of their love to the forms of religion, but no proof of its power. It has dwelt in thousands, whose hearts were not right with God.

And there are others, who seem to suppose, that the abandonment of some external vice is to be regarded as evidence of repentance unto life. Now, however commendable it be, to cease from violating the Sabbath, yet this alone is no evidence of genuine repentance. However commendable it be, to cease from profaneness, yet this is not sufficient evidence of godly sorrow. However commendable it be, to refrain from drunkenness, yet this is not sufficient evidence of repentance. However commendable it be, to abstain from covetousness, theft, or murder, yet this is no evidence of godly sorrow. There were men, in the time of our Saviour, who bore a strong resemblance to the ancient sepulchres, which outwardly appeared beautiful, but inwardly were full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. And however desirable it may be, to reform the morals of men, and to remove their vices, and fit them to be agreeable and useful citizens, yet this reformation is as much inferior to that which is internal and spiritual, as eternity is longer than time.

Repentance unto life is, indeed, attended by a reformation of morals, in all those who spiritually mourn over their sins. But this reformation is the effect of an internal change. "For behold," saith the apostle, "the self-same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort,

what carefulness it wrought in you; yea, what clearing of yourselves; yea, what indignation; yea, what fear; yea, what vehement desire; yea, what zeal; yea, what revenge!" The soul of the penitent man is careful to discriminate between good and evil—between light and darkness. It struggles against every unholy propensity, and every sinful habit, and toils through grace to extirpate them from the bosom. It hates every form of sin, and abhors every species of iniquity, and is indignant at the attempts of the adversary to draw him away from the love of God, the obedience of Christ, and the consolations of the Spirit. He fears to offend God, dishonor his Redeemer, grieve his Spirit, or bring reproach on that holy religion, which he professes to have received. His desires to glorify God and enjoy him, to honor the Son, even as he honors the Father, and to walk in the statutes and ordinances of the Lord blameless, are vehement. His zeal, in keeping the commands of his Father in heaven, transcends all computation; and thus he lives above the world. His life is hid with Christ in God. He exercises himself to have a conscience void of offence, both towards God and man. These powerful principles in the penitent heart, diffuse their odor through the whole man, and cause him to be widely different from what he was previously to the day of his penitence. Old things have passed away; behold all things have become new.

Nor is this a temporary change in his life. It does not pass away with the moments in which it was first produced. Nor does it vanish like the morning cloud and the early dew. The whole course of an individual who is brought into the kingdom of God, is a course of repentance. So permanent is it in this life, as not to be completed till the saints are made perfect in glory. And hence, they are represented as going home weeping

to the throne of God. And He is described as wiping away all tears from their eyes. Never, in this world, will the penitent man actually cease to mourn over his sins, to strive against them, or toil to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. These strivings against sin—these struggles for conformation to the divine character—and these sighs for advancement in holiness—are the evidence that God has granted unto us repentance unto life.

This subject is one of immense interest to the sons of men. It separates the heirs of eternal life from those who shall ultimately perish. It ought to sink down deep into every heart, and to cause every impenitent soul to tremble. The time of your mortal existence is rapidly going away. The day of your final account draws near. While it lingers, I once more exhort you to repent; I entreat you to repent. Do you raise your despairing eye, and mean, that you cannot repent? And do you, then, look downwards to the world of wo, as your unavoidable portion? I entreat you to fix your attention on Christ. Receive him as your Redeemer, and rest on him alone for salvation. He is exalted at the Father's right hand, to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel. Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. The wounded looked, and lived. The Son of Man is exalted at the Father's right hand. Look unto him, and be ye saved.

SERMON XI.

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD.

Rom. xi. 29.—"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

The apostle was here illustrating the wonderful grace of God, in preparing the way for the salvation both of Jews and Gentiles, and eventually of securing the eternal salvation of all who believe. While contemplating the various steps of this amazing grace, his feelings were excited, his soul moved, and his adoring tongue shouted, "O, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Amongst the various subjects, by which his mind was led into this adoring attitude, is that related in the passage which I have now read in your hearing. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Men are liable to change their regards, and cease to bestow benefactions on those whom they have once begun to patronise. The instances of such changes in the affections and in their objects, are so frequent amongst the children of men, as to form a trait in the human character. With the exception of here and there a rare instance of stability, mankind are found to be ardently pursuing one object; and then abandoning it for another, which, in its turn, is given over for another, while the former ones are scarcely desired and scarcely remembered. Almost every man, who will investigate the course of his life, cannot fail to see, that a vast number of objects have in succession presented themselves to his view, been earnestly desired, and sought, and toiled for, and then the pursuit of each has been abandoned, or the object itself,

if acquired, has been regarded as valueless, and suffered to go into neglect or decay.

Not so with the Almighty. He never forgets nor abandons those on whom he has set the seal of his grace. Having loved them, he continues to love them unto the end. Having effectually called them into the kingdom of his dear Son, he turns not from these objects of his affection. He repents not, that he has given them the privilege of being the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. He abandons them not to the control of their own hearts, nor to the machinations of the adversary, nor to the influence of the things of this world. He does not repent, that he has received them into his spiritual family, "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." This must be a cheering truth to every Christian. If you are really called into his kingdom, he will never leave nor forsake you.

I. He will not leave you in *prosperity*.

This is a period, when human friends are not apt to abandon us. Whatever may be true in hours of perplexity and trial, it is not true that men are apt to abandon us in days when all our interests flourish. There may not, indeed, be a higher degree of rich and precious affection, in days of prosperity, than in those of affliction. But it cannot be denied, that in the former condition, our apparent friends are vastly more numerous than in the latter. In those days, when success crowns all our exertions—when riches, or influence, or reputation increases—then all seem to stand in admiration, and all appear to be ready to minister to our gratification, and to provide for our necessities. In such a period, the Christian seems least to feel his need of the aid of the Almighty, and is least apt to understand his dependence, and least likely to cry earnestly to God for his help and his grace. Let it not be supposed, that times of prosperity are

limited to a single class of men. They are common to all men; and I know not but they are shared equally, in their own view, by men of small as of great influence —of limited as well as extensive reputation—of small as well as of great estate. There is no condition of life, in which there are not successions of prosperity and adversity. But while it is true, that in affliction, man is apt to feel his dependence on God; in prosperity, he is in danger of forgetting him. His mind may be employed in contemplating the things which he has acquired, and thus be detained from meditation on God. His heart may be so gratified with his attainments, either in possessions, or reputation, or influence, as not to send forth its affections to the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. It may be so enchanted with its own elevation, as not to remember the high and Holy One, who sitteth on the circle of the heavens, and wieldeth the vast concerns of the universe. And thus it may come to pass, that these intermediate objects may take away the mind and the heart from the living God; and the soul may thus be diverted from the great object of worship and homage, and be turned away into courses, which will bring on sorrow, and gloom, and eternal wo. Now, however delightful these blessings are, when received with thankfulness, yet if thus perverted to the injury of personal godliness, or the ruin of the soul, can we expect that the Most High will be a silent spectator of the injury and ruin of one, on whom he had bestowed the gifts and calling of his grace? Can we suppose, that he will leave the soul, in which he has thus begun a work of salvation, to pierce itself through with many sorrows, and to plunge itself in eternal wo? Will God repent of his undertaking, to bring home the wandering soul to Mount Zion, with songs and everlasting joy? And will not his infinite benevolence go forth, and be

manifested in the removal of some of those things, which have obstructed the visions of his own glory, and hindered us from rendering to him the homage to which he has a just claim, and which it is our duty, our privilege, our honor, and our happiness to render? No; in such circumstances God will chastise his children. He will not abandon them even to themselves—but with his own right hand will remove the obstructions to their growth in grace, and their preparation for glory. And if those who profess to be Christians do not, in such circumstances, find the rod of the Almighty stretched out against them; if they go on, from year to year, without chastisement, whereof all Christians are partakers, they have reason to conclude, that they are "bastards and not sons." They have ample grounds to suppose, that the gifts and calling of God have never been effectual to their renovation, and to their admission into the number of his children.

Nor, II. Does God leave his children in *adversity*.

There is no one amongst all the people of God, who is not subject to adversity. From the king on his throne, to the most obscure individual in his realm—from those whose possessions are so extensive, that they dwell alone in the land, to those who have no lot nor part in it, there is no exception. He, who yesterday was girded with majesty and strength, whose word was obeyed by thousands, may to-day be fleeing before a single person. He, whose flocks, and herds, and camels, yesterday amounted to thousands, may to-day be divested of them all. He, who yesterday saw a group of interesting children, lisping and reasoning around him, may to-day be called to mourn over their premature graves. Who has not heard of cases innumerable, in which these general statements have had a substantial fulfilment? Who has not heard of the monarch of Israel, who,

driven from his throne by his own son, was sustained in the wilderness by Barzillai, the Gileadite? Who has not read of the prince of Uz, who rose in the morning rich in all the blessings of Providence, and, before the sun went down, was deprived of his flocks and his herds, while the whirlwind overthrew the house in which his children were feasting, and buried them in a common ruin? And who has not known many godly parents, whose children have been prematurely cut down by the hand of death; and many devout individuals, whose possessions were suddenly wrested from them, and who, in a single day, were reduced from competence to poverty? And who does not know, that what he reads or sees to be true of one individual, is true of thousands on the face of the globe, and has been true of millions since the foundation of the world? In such a day of adversity, to what can he, who is without hope and without God in the world, resort for consolation? He is unaccustomed to hold communion with God. In his mind, the scenes of eternity are not invested with a cheering reality. He has lost his all below. He has no God above. He has no portion in heaven. He knows not how to hold cheering intercourse with the Lord his Maker. He knows not how to draw consolation from the fountain of eternal life. To him, God and his grace, Christ and his love, the Holy Spirit and his consolations, are cold, remote, and cheerless. Not so with the child of God. In the days of his adversity, his heavenly Father is near. The absence of every source of earthly comfort is supplied by his own presence. The sorrows produced by the departure of a mortal friend, are mitigated by the arrival of fresh and rich consolations from the eternal God. The loss of temporal possessions is remunerated by the gain of that earnest of the Spirit, which is a sure token of admission to an inheritance,

incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for him. The Lord gives him, in the figurative but expressive language of the prophet, beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and a garment of praise for a spirit of heaviness. God never abandons his children in days of adversity. His gifts and calling are without repentance. He never repents of bestowing his grace on any of the sons of Adam, because of any adversity through which they may be called to pass; but he is near to them, and sustains them by his almighty relief. His eye pities them. His hand strengthens them; and through all their trials it will carry them, till they stand on Mount Zion above.

III. God does not abandon his children in *disease*, and *death*.

It is indeed true, that some diseases by which in his holy providence he sees fit to afflict his children, as well as others, produce a lassitude, and sometimes a confusion of the understanding. This faculty, as well as those of the body, often suffers under the influence of those maladies, which are always the fruit, and sometimes the correctives of human depravity. It is not to be supposed, that Christians, in consequence of their faith in a Saviour, are released from those sufferings in this life, which in the just providence of God come alike to all. Faith in Christ is not designed to be in our days a prevention, or a cure of the infirmities of this life. And therefore it is not to be received, that such events are the result of a saving belief in the Son of God. That in the time of Christ and his apostles, such wonderful works were wrought as miracles, as confirmations of the glorious truths of Christianity, is readily conceded. It is always to be remembered, that these are not the common, and were never designed to be the common fruits of faith in Christ. Now, as it is

not the design of this faith, to counteract or destroy the diseases of this life; and as it is a fact, that under the same external circumstances, all external things come alike to all, it may be asked, in what does the tender mercy of God towards his children in sickness consist? To this I reply: In giving them, under all the circumstances of their disease, which are compatible with it, that internal consolation, accompanied with resignation to the divine will, and a confidence in his dispensations, which will expel from the mind those gloomy feelings, which are the companions of disease in others; and thus in a high degree to mitigate the distress, which would otherwise be endured. This may seem to be a hard, and even an unintelligible saying, to many who have not personally known the power of religion. But to those who have tasted the grace of God, and known its consolations, it will contain no mystery. They know the power of an internal and operative Christianity; and they can see how it is capable of sustaining us under those diseases, which are otherwise so insupportable. Nor is this fact altogether unknown by observation even to those who are without hope in the world. Many of you have stood by the pillow of a dying Christian; and I appeal to your memories, and ask if you have not seen the power of grace sustain the soul in peace, and elevate it in a great degree above the notice of the agonies of dissolving mortality? Have you not seen the attention of a poor, dying mortal, so fixed on the glories of heaven, and his heart so full of ecstacy, as to desire to depart and to be with Christ? Have you not read the declaration of the great apostle: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me at that day, and not to me only, but to all who love

his appearing?" And do you not perceive the coincidence between this dying expression, and that exultation which he uttered in remote anticipation of his dissolution—"O! death, where is thy sting? O! grave, where is thy victory?" Now, on what other principle can we account for these remarkable appearances of consolation in disease, and of triumph in death, without admitting and fully receiving the truth, that God does not leave his people, but watches over them with tenderness in these days of agony, and moments of death?

IV. God does not leave his people in *eternity*. There is something affecting in the thought of leaving this world and going into eternity. No thinking man can come near to the borders of the grave, without finding in his bosom the most interesting thoughts. As he gazes on the countenances of his acquaintance; as he fixes his dying eye on the forms of living clay, amongst whom he has spent his earthly pilgrimage; a crowd of affecting thoughts come into his soul. These friendly countenances, I shall soon see no more. The notes of these tongues shall soon cease to fall on my ears. Then, whom shall I behold? What spirit shall I first meet? How shall I communicate my thoughts to any of the beings unto whom I shall soon go? What friend have I in the country beyond the river of death, to whom I can declare all my thoughts and my feelings? Think not, my hearers, that a mind leaving its tabernacle has no such thoughts as these. No; they rush in on every side; and the soul, that has ever been near to eternity in anticipation, is no stranger to them. And it will also inquire what reception a spirit so impure, as itself must be, will receive from the spirits of just men made perfect in glory? It will ask, how the holy angels can condescend to hold intercourse with a soul, which has so recently been engaged in acts which are offensive to

God? Above all, it will inquire whether a being of spotless holiness must not regard such a soul with abhorrence? And whether our Lord Jesus Christ will not be ashamed of so guilty and unworthy a member of his family?

But here it is consoling to know, that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." When Jehovah began the work of our salvation, he did not undertake to save those, who were pure and needed no washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. The Saviour came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. The Holy Ghost came not to aid those who were perfect, but to renew and gradually to mature for heaven, those who are by nature children of wrath, and are hastening to destruction. And when the Father has set his eternal love on any individual, and the Son has caused his own blood to be so applied to him, as to procure his justification, and the Holy Spirit has begun the great work of renovating and preparing the soul for heaven, think ye that the Godhead will abandon this soul, when it goes alone, relying on the blood of the Lamb, into the immediate presence of the Almighty? Will it be excluded from those heavenly scenes, and those eternal mansions, which are prepared for the righteous? Of such souls the scriptures declare—"they shall go no more out forever." However unworthy such a soul may deem itself to be of his eternal presence and favors, God will not forsake it. His gifts and calling are without repentance. He will graciously receive it, and cause it to be forever blessed in his presence. Nothing shall separate it from the love of Christ. Neither life, nor death; nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to alienate Jehovah from the soul, on which he has once set his love.

This subject calls on us. 1. To "behold what manner

of love the Father hath bestowed on us, in making us the children of God."

It is not on account of any virtue or holiness originally in ourselves, but altogether for the sake of his beloved Son, that we are received into his family, and made the heirs of his grace. Nor after our reception into his family, is it at all owing to our freedom from transgression, that we are retained in it. Frequently, do we violate his holy commandments. Our thoughts, our feelings, and our actions, are often at variance with the holy principles of his government. Would not the parent, whose children violate his commands, as often as we violate those of Jehovah—would not such a parent be grieved? Would not the earthly benefactor whose beneficiaries were as regardless of the rules of his house, as we are of those which God has given—would not he exclude them from his favor, and withhold from them the gifts which he had intended to bestow? But God commended his love to us, in that he never abandons those whom he has brought into his spiritual household. He forgives all their transgressions, purifies them from all their guilt, and eventually brings them home to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy. "O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

The subject suggests, 2. That the people of God will never repent of having been made the subjects of his grace, and the partakers of his heavenly calling.

Though, in consequence of the remains of depravity in their bosoms, they are not perfect, and are frequently guilty of transgression, yet the prevailing tendencies of their hearts are right with God. Who ever yet heard a Christian complain, and say, that he regretted that he had been so early called into the kingdom of Christ,

or that he had walked so much with God? Who ever heard a dying saint bemoan his fidelity to Christ, and express his regret, that he had walked in all the statutes and ordinances of the Lord? Who ever heard, that a devout soul, in the immediate prospect of eternity, was found to pour forth expressions of deep distress, because it had so uniformly feared the Lord, and kept his commandments? To the real Christian, then, "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." While, indeed, he mourns over his transgressions, and repents of his sins, he does not repent of the grace and calling of God. His soul highly appreciates them. For them it is deeply and durably thankful. And its only sorrow is, because it improves them so poorly, and so little honors the God of salvation.

The subject suggests, 3. The character of the children of God.

If the saints never repent of having received the gifts, and of having heard the call of God, then there will be no appearance of such a repentance in them. Their errors and sins will seem to be the result of inadvertence, of sudden temptation, or passion, rather than of coldness and indifference. Brethren, there is no such being in the universe, as an indifferent Christian. In the present acceptation of the term, there is no such thing as a cold Christian, in all the kingdom of God. Those who are thus denominated in our times, are individuals who are continually repenting of the very idea, that they are under such obligations to God, and they labor to discharge as few of them as possible. Instead of laboring to counteract and overcome their indifference, their coldness, and their spiritual inactivity, they toil to excuse it, and often sin by casting the blame on others, and even on God, rather than to bemoan their own depravity, and to devote themselves to Jehovah.

SERMON XII.

JUSTIFICATION THROUGH GRACE.

ROM. iii. 24.—"Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

THE work of human salvation is the most interesting of all the doings of the Almighty. It is impossible to view it in any of its attitudes, without finding much to baffle the understanding as well as to awake gratitude. No one, of all these attitudes, is invested with a higher degree of interest, or calls more loudly for human inquiry, than the doctrine of our justification through grace. In presenting this subject to your minds to-day, I shall inquire,

I. Who are they, who need to be justified?

II. What is justification?

III. How are sinners justified?

IV. What are the grounds of our justification?

I. Who are they, who need to be justified?

They are not the holy angels. These are already just. And an examination of their lives would result in a declaration, that they had always been just. Their characters give them a claim to the eternal favor of Jehovah; and of this they cannot be deprived without injustice. But there are beings who have violated his laws, and failed to discharge their obligations to him. The withholding of their affections from him, and from one another, is a continued act, or series of acts, of injustice. These are those who need to be justified. They are sinners —transgressors of the divine law—condemned, in con-

sequence of their sins, to suffer eternal punishment; and exposed every day to be sent away into that world, "where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched." It is this condemnation from which they need to be relieved. It is this exposure from which they must be extricated. It is this doom from which they need to be released.

But, II. What is justification?

We ought here to be careful not to confound justification with sanctification. The former relates to the release of the sinner from the penalty of the law, and is the act of the Almighty, as moral Governor of the world. It is the act of God, by which he removes from the sinner the condemning sentence of the law, and receives him fully into favor with himself. The work of justification is complete at its very commencement. God fully justifies the sinner. Let me not here be understood to say, that he declares the sinner to be personally just; to have, at all times and under all circumstances, lived holy, righteously, and godly. This no sinner has ever done. For all have gone out of the way. There is none that doeth good; no, not one. It can never, therefore, be declared by Jehovah, that sinners have always been just. Every decision of the Almighty on their characters will be according to truth; and, therefore, he can never declare those, who have been guilty, to be innocent. What, then, is meant by the phrase "justification," in this respect? I reply, that this term is not to be understood in the sense of a legal acquittal. It is not a declaration, that its subjects are not guilty; but a full admission of the fact that they are so. It is a declaration, on the part of God, that, though guilty, he will, on account of the righteousness, the sufferings, and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, treat them as if they were innocent, and raise them to the high and holy pri-

vilege of being the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.

I have remarked, that this work is completed as soon as it is begun. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ, that died, yea, rather that is risen again." The justified spirit is fully acquitted and made free. But what is this freedom? It is freedom from the condemnation of the law. What is this condemnation? The soul that sinneth shall die. And in justification, the soul which has sinned is brought into such a relation to God, that it shall not die. It is fully free from the condemnation of the law, and is brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

Now, though justification be complete the moment a sinner submits to God, let it not be inferred that this is true of sanctification. This is not an act of God, as moral governor of the universe, but of the Holy Ghost, as the sanctifier of human hearts. Justification relates to the claims of the penalty of the law, on the eternal misery of the sinner. Sanctification comprises only the subjugation of the heart to the claims of the law as a rule of life. It is the growing conformation of the heart to the rules of life enjoined in the moral law, which is a transcript of the moral image of God, of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost. Whilst, therefore, the work of justification is completed the moment a sinner believes, the work of sanctification is not finished till the day when the saints are made perfect in glory.

Now, as justification is that act of the Almighty, by which one who is condemned to eternal death, by the moral law, is released from suffering eternal punish-

ment, and restored to the favor of heaven, it is necessary to inquire,

III. How are sinners justified?

I reply, in the words of the apostle, "*freely, through his grace.*"

They are justified "FREELY,"

From the fact, that they who are justified have been sinners and only sinners, and that continually, it is plain, that they can never be justified, on account of any deeds, or feelings previously to their justification. God sees nothing righteous or lovely in them. They are altogether unclean and loathsome in his view. There is nothing in them, which can attract his favorable notice or regard. There is nothing which does not excite his disapprobation. Even the tears of impenitent but awakened sinners are drawn forth, because God will not save them in any other way, than that of free forgiveness through our Lord Jesus Christ—because he requires them to abandon all reliance on their own feelings and actions, and cast their anchor for eternity into the ocean of the merits of Christ. Their prayers are commonly directed to the relief of the woes which they feel, and which they anticipate, rather than to the renovation of their hearts, and to their acceptance with God.

And, besides all this, when a poor beggar comes to your door, and asks for bread, do you regard his *asking* as a remuneration for that which you give? Or is it not, after all, a *gift?* And even if he accompany his request with tears, is not your bounty still a gift? And though both asking and tears may have preceded the reception of the bounty, yet they are in no respect a remuneration, nor do they tend, in the least degree, to compensate for the thing which he asks. So would it be respecting the prayers and tears of the sinner, even on the supposition, that he truly desires the things

which he appears mournfully to ask of God. To ask, is not to remunerate for the thing which is thus asked. No effort which we can make will secure a right to justification. We can never claim it of the Holy One of Israel. Nor is there any thing in our characters to attract the attention, and call forth the assistance of the Almighty. We, by nature and practice, are exceedingly loathsome to him.

And hence, if he ever justify a son or daughter of Adam, it will be owing to his own mercy. It will be without any prospect of remuneration for the glorious deed. And hence, it is said to be done "FREELY, BY HIS GRACE." The term "grace," in this instance, relates not so much to the act of God in justifying men, as to the mercy which moves him to this act. It is the grace of God, his eternal love, his desire to promote the best good of his subjects, and his earnestness to diffuse through the universe a knowledge of those perfections, which fill all heaven with delight, that move him to rescue fallen man from perdition, and to treat him as if he had never sinned.

But you may be ready to inquire, how can it consist with the divine honor and the dignity of his government, thus to treat those who had rebelled against him?

IV. What are the grounds of this justification?

To this I reply, the redemption that is in our Lord Jesus Christ. This redemption is variously illustrated in the scriptures. In some instances it is called a price —a ransom—referring probably to the redemption of captives, from those who had taken them in war. In other instances, it is represented as a sacrifice, not offered for one individual, nor family, nor neighborhood, nor nation, but for the world. Offered not only *for* the world, but also in view of the universe, "That unto principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be

known the manifold wisdom, and goodness, and grace of God," as well as his thorough abhorrence of iniquity. And in consequence of this manifestation of his Son, to be a propitiation for sin, he can now be just, while he justifies the believer in Jesus. He can now appear to have a strict regard to all the interests of his government, and to the glory of his character, and to the safety of the interests of righteousness and true holiness.

And when, in coming periods of time, it shall be asked respecting those that shall go home to Zion, Who are these? it will be impossible not to reply, They are the descendants of the fallen Adam, who once dwelt in Eden. But did not his apostacy affect and injure his descendants; involve them in depravity; and expose them to final and eternal perdition? It will here also be impossible not to reply, that in consequence of *his* sin, their nature became depraved, and that they departed from the living God, were regardless of his authority, broke his law, despised his warnings, and incurred his eternal displeasure. And here, if in any future period of eternity, the inquiry be made, either by a friend or an enemy of God, How came these, who were once transgressors—once aliens from the commonwealth of righteousness—once strangers to God—how came they to be reconciled to their Father in heaven? And how came *he* to pass over their offences, and to receive them as dear children, and to bring into his family those who had once been members of the household of Satan, and to confer an eternal reward on those who had exposed themselves to eternal punishment? The admission of any of the sons of Adam into heaven, will produce such inquiries as these. And if, in the ages to come, world after world shall be created, and their inhabitants shall go home to glory, and shall there learn the story of Adam and his children, and shall begin to wonder how

God could pass over their offences, and receive them into his family, then there will be fresh occasions for telling the history of a Saviour's love. As often as the appearance in heaven, of these mysterious strangers from our world, these deserters from Satan's kingdom shall excite surprise, the reasons of this great transaction shall be repeated, and shall call forth feelings of wonder and notes of gratitude. Then, the inhabitants that arrive at heaven, from the myriads of worlds which move in majesty around us, shall be told of the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world. And if, at any time, their minds shall desire more fully to understand how such guilty and worthless beings as we are, could be justified and brought home to eternal glory, they will be told of Calvary. Here they will be shown the great sacrifice which has been offered for men. They will be taught, with wonder and astonishment, that the being whom they adore was so deeply affected by a view of our condition, as to take into connexion with himself human nature, and die—the just for the unjust. The history of the babe of Bethlehem will be told in heaven. The nightly proclamation of the angels to the shepherds, watching their flocks on the plains of Judea, will be rehearsed: "*Peace on earth and good will to men.*" The deprivations of our Lord on earth, will be distinctly recited: "He came to his own, and his own received him not." "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but he had not where to lay his head." The arraignment of the Lord of Glory before Pontius Pilate—before a man to whom he had given breath—and whom, in one moment, he could have destroyed; Pontius Pilate—who himself shall yet stand trembling before the Son of Man, and be judged according to his deeds—must be re-told in eternity with all its affecting incidents. The scoffings

which he endured, from the infamous rabble that surrounded him; the crown of thorns, placed deridingly on his head; the scourgings, which he mildly received from those whom he had come to save, and whom he could in a moment destroy, will enter into this affecting narrative. And, above all, the attention will be turned to Calvary and to the cross; and the injuries, and pangs, and fearful sorrows, which the Son of God there endured, will be related. It will be told, how he was "wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; how the chastisement of our peace fell upon him; and how, by his stripes, we are healed." It will be fully declared, that on account of this sacrifice alone, we, though violators of the divine law, are treated as if we had been righteous; that through him, that is, through his blood, we were redeemed from all our transgressions, and received into his family. The ground of our justification will be clearly seen to be, the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this will always appear, both to angels, and to principalities, and to powers; and to every being in the universe, who understands the process of our justification, as a most noble and glorious manifestation of the righteousness and tender mercy of God. And they will be ready to shout, "O, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and mercy of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

Now, if such be the manner and the grounds of our justification, then it follows, I. That we have no ground for boasting.

We are not justified by our own works. Previously to justification, we have no works but those of darkness and sin. We are utterly unworthy of any favor at the hand of the Lord. We deserve only destruction from his presence, and from the glory of his power. It is

nothing good which God has seen in us, that has led him to have mercy upon us. It is nothing holy in our souls, which has excited him to treat us as his children. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." If, then, not in consequence of any works of our own, but altogether of the self-moving goodness of God, we are justified, then we have no occasion to boast, but to prostrate ourselves before God, and to say, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory."

From the subject I infer, II. That we ought to be exceedingly humble.

If we are indeed justified, it is owing altogether to the tender mercy and love of our God.

It is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of his mercy he hath saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. We ought, then, to take a low place before Jehovah. We ought to put far from us, every feeling of reliance on our own works, and to be willing to own ourselves to be poor and worthless beings. In this way, we should give to all around us an exalted impression of the glory of the God of Israel. We should show to all exactly what God does—how upon the poor, the unworthy, the sinner, he confers the greatest of all gifts, justifying him freely, gratuitously, and making him by grace an heir of God, and a joint heir of Christ, to an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. With such feelings, we should be qualified to be useful to others. We should esteem others better than ourselves. We should not be lifted up above the impenitent around us, but should feel that they, as well as ourselves, may become the subjects of this grace, wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. So mild, so kind, so condescending, so contrite shall we

be, that others will take knowledge of us, that we have been with Jesus, and will glorify our Father in heaven. We, too, shall be living, moving, acting illustrations of the effects of that grace which Jesus has procured for unworthy mortals. This lowliness corresponds with our real relation to God. How would it become a poor prisoner, who had been released by pardon from a prison, to which he had been sentenced for life; how would it become him to walk humbly, and mildly, and contritely before his fellow-citizens! How utterly incompatible with his condition and relation to the community, would it be for him to be proud, haughty, and boisterous! And how infinitely more incompatible with the condition of fallen and yet pardoned man, is pride, and haughtiness, and self-sufficiency! O, let them be not so much as named or suspected. But, beloved, put ye on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercy, tenderness, humbleness of mind.

III. If we are indeed justified through grace, it becomes us to be full of gratitude to God for this unspeakable gift.

We can see no reason why one is taken and another left. We know no reason why the word of God was sent to us, while large portions of the earth have been left destitute of this rich blessing. We know no reason why God has justified any one of us, while so many around us are without hope and without God in the world. We know no reason why a salvation is conferred on us, which is not on others. Even Jehovàh put this inquiry to us, "Who maketh thee to differ?" It is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of his mercy he saved us. Having, then, though unworthy, been made the partakers of this justification, ought ye not to be deeply grateful for it? Ought not your gratitude to influence you to devote yourselves continually

to him that loveth you, and hath died for you? Ought it not to influence you to be continually ascribing blessing, and honor, and glory, and dominion, and power unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb?

IV. If you are indeed justified through grace, ought you not to be careful to grow in grace?

The great design of our Lord Jesus Christ, in coming to redeem men, was to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. It was to set them free from the condemnation of the law, that, being justified through his blood, they might grow in grace and in conformity to his holy will; and hence, we are commanded, "Be not conformed unto this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Is it possible for you to meditate on the love of God, which has opened the door of heaven for your reception, without being moved to newness of life? Is it possible for you to meditate on the fact, that God has pardoned all your sins, without emotions of gratitude to him, so strong as to move you to commit yourself unto him, to be employed in his service forever?

Renounce, then, all dependence on your own works, and receive him who was wounded for your transgressions, bruised for your iniquities; on whom the chastisement of your peace was laid, and by whose stripes there is now opportunity for you to be healed.

SERMON XIII.

SANCTIFICATION AND PERSEVERANCE.

PHIL. i. 6.—"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Christ."

IT is a fact readily acknowledged by all intelligent Christians, that in regeneration they are created anew in Christ Jesus, that the stony heart is taken out of their flesh, and an heart of flesh given them, and that they are "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." By this operation, the spiritual image of God, which was lost in our first parents, is restored to their hearts. This image is at first, indeed, only a faint resemblance of him, who was holy, harmless, and undefiled. Its lines are feeble and obscure. Although it is a real image of the Holy One, yet much labor is requisite to complete it, and make it bear a perfect resemblance to its original. The heart, though really renewed, is not perfectly divested of its native corruptions. By an inscrutable arrangement of heaven, it is not made perfect till the day when it shall be received to the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven. The remains of corrupt nature, which infect all the duties of the saints, and render all their services imperfect—which sometimes break forth in evil thoughts, and unholy projects, and base passions, and unhallowed deeds—these remains of their corrupt nature, need to be renovated. I know that I shall here be met by the objection in many minds, that the work of salvation is complete the moment it is begun. I know it will be

alleged, as divine authority, that "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." And here it is necessary to say, that this passage, with several others of similar meaning, relate not to sanctification. They pertain exclusively to the doctrine of justification. Now, "justification is *not a work*, but an *act* of God, whereby he pardons our sins, and accepts us as righteous in his sight, on account of the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone." This *act* of God's free grace is completed the moment it is begun. By this *act*, the sinner is released from suffering the penalty of the law, and is accepted and treated as righteous in the view of a holy God. This *act* changes the relation of a man to the law. It takes away his exposure to suffer its curse. It gives him a title to all the blessings which were procured by our Lord Jesus Christ.

But sanctification, instead of being an *act*, completed the moment it is begun, is a *work* of the Holy Spirit, which will not be completed till the soul is made perfect in glory. Instead of changing the state of an individual from final condemnation to eternal salvation, it gradually transforms the renovated and yet imperfect heart of the saint, and thus increases that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." This *work* is continued, till the subject of it bears a perfect resemblance to Christ—till the "corruptible puts on incorruption," and the "mortal puts on immortality." Thus, while it is true in respect to the penalty of the law, that Christians are not subject to condemnation, it is also true, that in regeneration the carnal mind is not perfectly renovated, and wholly subjected to the law of God, and the life is not brought into entire conformity to his holy precepts. Between the moment of regeneration and that of entrance on eternal glory, a vast *work*, in purifying their nature

and conduct, is to be accomplished. This is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Sanctification, then, is the work of the Holy Spirit, in gradually maturing a renewed man for a world of perfect holiness.

This consists in two things,

I. A gradual purification of our nature.

II. A correspondent purification of our lives, so that our obedience is gradually approaching nearer to the standard of holiness.

Sanctification consists, I. In a gradual purification of our nature.

In regeneration, this work of purification is begun. To this the apostle refers in the text: "Being confident of this one thing, that he, which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Christ." Regeneration is the first *act* of the Holy Spirit in purifying our nature. This work is gradually carried on, till the soul is made perfect in glory. That there are remains of original corruption in the renewed man, no one will doubt. This is evinced in every part of the scriptures. David, although he had been long a servant of the living God, mournfully acknowledged his internal corruption, and prayed thus for his entire renovation: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." And Paul, although he delighted in the law of God after the inward man, confessed his inherent depravity, and said, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" With these descriptions of their renovated and yet imperfect state, the views of all genuine saints are found to agree. By mournful experience they know, that the remains of

depravity still reside in their bosoms, and infect all their nature. Now, these remains it is the work of sanctification to remove. And hence, the apostle prayed for the Thessalonians, saying, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God, your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Thus, also, he told the Ephesians, to "Put off concerning the former conversation, the *old man*, which is *corrupt* according to the *deceitful lusts*, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Here, he distinctly recognises the operation of God, in continually renovating "the saints," even "the faithful in Christ Jesus." The fruit cannot be good, except the tree be also good. The streams cannot be pure, unless the fountain be also pure. The life cannot be holy, unless the nature be holy also. Nor can it be holy in a higher degree than the nature of the agent is sanctified. This sanctification consists in gradually clarifying the spiritual sight of believers, and thus enabling them more distinctly to discern divine things, and more readily to acquire divine knowledge. It consists in purging the conscience, and causing it to pronounce more correctly on the relations of the conduct to the law, and also to the gospel of Christ. It consists also in a gradual purification of the heart already renewed; thus causing the lines of the divine image, already engraven on the inner man, to become more apparent. Thus, the regenerate are continually undergoing a process of renovation in "knowledge, righteousness, and holiness." This operation is wrought by the Holy Ghost, in virtue of their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, Peter said of the converts amongst the Gentiles, "God, who knoweth the hearts, bore them witness, giving them the

Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us, and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." And Paul also speaks of being sent by Christ to the Gentiles, "That they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me." And, to a church planted by his own labour, he wrote an epistle, and directed it, "*Unto the* church of God, which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus." None but they, who, through grace, have received Christ, and rested on him alone for salvation, are the subjects of this sanctifying operation, by which the corruption of their nature is purged away, and their souls fitted to dwell in a world of perfect and eternal holiness. Thus, in those who are regenerated and united to Christ, there is a gradual purification of their nature.

II. There is also a correspondent purification of their lives, so that their actual obedience is approaching nearer the standard of holiness. This is the design of God in renovating our nature. Thus, also, the apostle intimates, Eph. ii. 10, "*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.*" The apostle affectingly illustrates the state of the renewed man, by a reference to the death of our Lord, and thus intimates, that as he died a sacrifice for sinful men, so they ought to die, in reference to a sinful life. "Know ye not," saith he, "know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?" that is, upon the recognition of the principle that he died for sin. "Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death." Therefore, as Christ having died for sin, was buried, so we by our baptism profess, that in reference to a life of sin, we die and are buried. And like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life. For if we

have been planted together in the likeness of his death —if, as he died for sin, and was buried, so we die and are buried, as to a life of sin—if, indeed, this similitude exists between us and Christ, there will also be a similitude in respect to resurrection; for as he, in respect to natural life, died and rose again, so we die in respect to sin, and rise to righteousness, knowing this, that as he was crucified, so our old man is crucified, "That the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead," (that is, dead to sin,) "is freed from sin," "knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him, for in that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin." This comparison and exhortation unquestionably imply, that in regeneration, the principle of sin in the soul receives a mortal wound, and the principle of holiness is enthroned in its place, so that sin has no longer the dominion over the man; and yet it also intimates, that the corruption of nature is not altogether expelled from the saints. Hence, they are exhorted, "Mortify, therefore, your members, which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." And this is accomplished by all those to whom the image of God has been restored by regeneration. The power of sin being broken within them, and spiritual life being communicated to the soul, they abhor iniquity. They resist it. They contend with it. They gradually gain the victory over it. It is impos-

sible that they should continue in it. Just in proportion as they are internally sanctified, does their relish for sin abate. And if the question occurs, "Shall we continue in sin?" they immediately reply, "God forbid; how shall we, who are dead to sin, continue any longer therein." Thus, through grace operating within their souls, they are enabled gradually to eradicate their corrupt tendencies, and to die unto sin. Their love of the world gradually abates. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, are continually losing their power. As the internal corruption declines, all the external manifestations of it correspondently decline, and thus, through the mighty operation of the Holy Spirit, the whole man grows in resemblance to God, and in obedience to his revealed will.

Nor does this work consist merely in a diminution of the evil propensities. It increases and strengthens all those graces which are produced by regeneration.

Although in regeneration men become new creatures, and are endued with the Christian graces, yet this is not sufficient for all the exigencies of human life, nor for admission to the kingdom of God. Although we are manifestly the epistle of Christ, "Written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart;" yet we are insufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God. The Christian graces are indeed implanted in us by the Spirit, but they cannot grow without his continued operation. This is done in sanctification.

1. In sanctification, FAITH is increased and strengthened. It is a common opinion, that the first act of faith in a renovated soul, is perhaps more pure and strong, than any subsequent one. And hence, Christians are exceedingly apt to recur to the scenes of their

acceptance of Christ, as the most pure and heavenly in their mortal existence. It is indeed true, that these are precious moments. Faith in Christ, is a state of the soul entirely new to the recent convert, and hence, it is specially noticed. But there is no reason to believe, that either in principle, or act, its early strength is at all comparable to that which it subsequently acquires. Unless this be true, it will follow, that the man continually lives in disobedience to Christ. Every Christian is commanded to "grow in grace." And it is unquestionable, that every genuine saint grows in faith. This is an object of anxiety and prayer. Thus, a father who had brought his child to Christ to be healed, "cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." The chosen disciples of our Lord, prayed, "increase our *faith*." Thus, Paul, Sylvanus, and Timotheus, addressed the church of the Thessalonians, saying, "Wherefore, also, we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power." One of the things in which sanctification consists, is an increase of faith.

2. Another particular in sanctification, is an increase of humility and penitence.

Just in proportion as the eyes of the understanding are opened, does the renovated man discern the excellency of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He perceives the spirituality and extent of the divine law, and the glories of the godhead, as they are manifested in the work of redemption. Now, although a mere carnal view of these glorious things, awakens in the impenitent bosom a dread of the Holy One of Israel, yet their influence on the renewed man, is entirely different. When Jehovah manifested his perfections to Job, who had long feared God, and walked before

him in righteousness, the afflicted man replied, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." When Isaiah saw the "Lord setting on a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filling the temple," and heard the seraphim crying "one to another, and saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory;" his mind returned to himself, and he said, "Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." Unto such as are truly penitent, the scriptures declare, that God giveth more grace. Wherefore, he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. "For thus saith the high and lofty one, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit; to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Nothing is more evident than that the saints, as they advanced in the divine life, became more humble and penitent. Every new glimpse of the glory of God, as revealed in his holy word, has caused them also to discover more of their own deformities, and to mourn more bitterly over their own sins, and to take a still lower station before God, and to raise with a louder cry, the supplication, God be merciful to us sinners. Every new manifestation of the love of Christ to their renewed hearts, has increased the sense of their own vileness, and of the enormity of their transgressions. Every degree of their conformation to the image of God, has served to increase their abhorrence of remaining sinfulness, and to awaken new sorrow for their actual transgressions; and thus, as the process of sanctification advances, the penitence

and humility of the subjects of this work, correspondently increase.

A third particular in sanctification, is an increase of love.

The grand requisition of the divine law is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." Previously to regeneration, the mind is not subject to this law, neither indeed can be; but in conversion, the heart is prepared to keep the commandments of God. It is qualified to love God and man. This is plainly declared by the apostle, Gal. v. 22: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love." This principle, implanted in man by his regeneration, is gradually perfected in sanctification. For this growth of love, not only in his own soul, but in those of others, the Christian constantly cries to God. "And this I pray," said Paul to the Philippians, "and this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." And for the Thessalonians Paul prayed, "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."

Nor does the fruit of the Spirit consist merely in love, as many in these days assert. Benevolence is but a small part of the Christian character, as set forth by our Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever may have been true of Adam in his primeval state, or of angels before the throne of God, it certainly is not true, that benevolence,

however disinterested, is the whole duty of man. The scriptures never declare Christian virtue to consist in some single characteristic, to the exclusion of others equally important. Nor do they represent the Holy Spirit in repairing the ruins of the fall, as producing a single trait of the genuine saint, and neglecting all the rest. No; they describe his operation as extending to the whole man, and producing and maturing all those qualities which God requires. They declare, that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;" and that "they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." All the graces of Christians are the work of the Spirit. By him they are gradually strengthened, till the saints are mature for heaven. Hence, David said, "They go from strength to strength. Every one of them in Zion, appeareth before God." And Solomon also said, "The path of the just, is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." This is the course of all who are born of the Spirit. The image of God in them, is constantly becoming more distinct. Their lives, also, are advancing nearer and nearer to the standard of righteousness, as contained in the ten commandments, and illustrated in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. And they can cordially say, "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." And "every one that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

This is the grand result of the process, which the Holy Spirit carries forward in the hearts of those whom he has renewed. This operation is necessary to qualify the saints to dwell with God, for "without holiness, no

man shall see the Lord." It is necessary to answer the object of the sufferings of our Lord, for he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. It is necessary to purge out the corruption of our nature, render our obedience more pure and constant on the earth, and fit us for the holy society of heaven.

But you may here inquire, What are the motives which should induce us to seek this sanctification?

I reply, I. God commands it. He calls on his people, and says to them, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind; be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance, but as he, which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation: because it is written, be ye holy, for I am holy." By the authority of Jehovah, we are commanded to be holy. And the apostle by the same authority, says, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." And who that has a respect for this supreme authority, will not pray, that all the graces of the Spirit may abound in his own soul?

II. The love of Christ urges it.

No saint can contemplate the object of Christ's death, without a living persuasion, that he ought to be wholly consecrated to him who hath loved us and died for us. This persuasion ripens into an urgency to become conformed to his image. The more the character and work of Christ is contemplated by the renewed man, the more pressingly is he constrained to live to the glory of his Redeemer. "For the love of Christ," saith the apostle, "constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he

died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them." "Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh. Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."

III. A preparation for the world of glory, is an inducement to seek this sanctification.

Every Christian has a hope of going home to the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And he knows that this is the abode of holiness. There are the saints, regenerated by the Holy Spirit and eventually made perfect in glory. There are the angels, the pure and holy beings who have never rebelled against God. There is Jesus, the holy, harmless, undefiled Jesus. There is God, before whom all the armies above cry, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. Into this holy abode, nothing can enter that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie. And what renewed soul, does not desire to go to Mount Zion, and mingle in the delights, the melodies, and the thanksgivings of heaven? Did not Moses, through faith, choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season? Did he not esteem the reproach of Christ, greater riches than the treasures of Egypt? Had he not respect unto the recompense of reward? And is not this holy abode also distinctly held forth in every part of the scriptures, as an inducement to holiness? Are we not told, that "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord?"

IV. Another inducement to seek the sanctification of our hearts and lives, is the fact, that we are thus made to glorify God, by answering the object of all the purposes, precepts, and promises of grace.

Thus, the great design of God in *choosing* us unto eternal life is accomplished. "God hath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness." And hence, the apostle says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." This is the grand object of our REGENERATION; and hence, it is said of Jehovah, that he "hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." This is the grand object of our JUSTIFICATION. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." "Being, then, made free from sin, (from the dominion of sin,) ye became the servants of righteousness." It is the end of the GOODNESS and MERCY of God, manifested to us. And hence, the apostle asks, "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" This is the end of all the CHASTISEMENTS which are inflicted upon us. In this respect, God is compared to our earthly parents, who corrected us, and "we gave them reverence; shall we not rather be in subjection to the Father of our spirits and live? For they, verily,

for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now, no chastisement seemeth for the present to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, to them that are exercised thereby." This also is the *design* of all the *commands* to abstain from sin, to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord; the object of all the *promises* of grace, and of all the operations of the Spirit on the heirs of eternal life.

But you may here ask again, What are the evidences of sanctification? How can I know that this gracious process is begun in me?

To this I reply, that the process of sanctification is attended *by an increase of love* to God, of regard to his law, of abhorrence of sin, of jealousy over our own hearts, and of striving against sin. It is attended by a *growing delight* in obedience, and by a behavior coinciding with all the principles of the gospel. It is attended also by a *more deep* and penetrating sense of our need of the righteousness and blood of Christ, and by louder cries for the purification of our whole nature. It produces higher and higher degrees of conformity, in our conduct, to the great pattern of righteousness. It causes the renewed soul to live above the world, and to have its life hid with Christ in God, whilst it cherishes a growing delight in all his commands, his ordinances, and his service. These are the evidences of a work of sanctification within us. Wherever these things do not exist, it is certain that there is no sanctification, nor genuine faith, nor repentance unto life.

This subject is one of unspeakable importance to the children of men. On this account, I desire to call your attention to several of its practical bearings.

I. Sanctification is the only evidence of justification.

This position has been maintained by sound divines, in all ages, in the church. None but Antinomians ever pretend, that the fact of their justification is revealed to them, and that there is, in some secret manner, a notice conveyed to the soul that it has been born of God. Now, though it be undeniable, that in regeneration an individual may be conscious that some change has occurred in him, how can he at once *know* the nature of this change? In no other way except by the tendency of this new state, can the supposed convert determine its nature. The tendency can be known only by his obedience or disobedience. "Hereby," said John, "do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." For this observance of the commands of God, sanctification prepares and disposes our hearts. And never, till an individual has had time and opportunity thus to test the change, which he supposes to have been wrought in himself, is it proper for him to believe that he has been born of God. Until he has thus tried himself, he has no evidence that he is a new creature; and it is hazardous to his eternal interests to believe himself a saint, or to offer himself for admission to the church.

II. And whilst it is hazardous to an immortal being, upon the consciousness of some change of feeling in himself, to rush into the church, it is a transaction of awful criminality, in a minister of the gospel, to admit him. Even our Lord Jesus Christ did not admit men under such circumstances as these. At one time, many, seeing his miracles, believed on his name: "But Jesus did not commit himself to them, because he knew what was in man." The multitude that here believed, Jesus saw reason for refusing to receive as his disciples, and he has cautioned us to be careful in our administrations, and told us, "That by their fruits we shall know them,"

and that "Faith without works is dead." And shall any minister of Christ pretend, that he is acting by the authority of his Master, when he admits to the church those who have had no *time to bring forth fruit?* Shall he dare to say, that many are *born of the Spirit,* when he has had no opportunity to see whether their faith will produce good works, or is dead, being alone? The man who thus builds a church, puts into the edifice wood, hay, and stubble, which will be consumed by fire in the day when it shall be tried; and if his own soul escape an *eternal damnation,* it will BE SO AS BY FIRE. It is an awful sin to deal thus treacherously with immortal souls—to take their declaration, instead of the fruits of righteousness, as evidence that they are Christians; and then, either through a corrupt education, or misjudgment, or ambition, or fanaticism, to open the doors of the church, admit a collection of men, several of whom are impenitent, to the table of the Lord—to encourage and harden them in their deception, and to smooth for them the way to hell. *It is an awful sin* to deal thus deceitfully with the eternal interests of men. And I could to-day tell you of a church, from which one hundred persons were at once excluded, who had thus been hurried into it in a period of excitement; and many, as soon as they had time to examine themselves, and find that they were without God in the world, anxiously desired to be put out of the church, and bitterly execrated those whose agency had placed them in it. And is there no sin in placing in the church those who have never given, nor had time to give, evidence that they are born of God? Is there no transgression in ministers, who thus conspire with the depravity of the heart and the machinations of Satan, to delude and destroy the unsuspecting sons of men? Whatever others may do, I solemnly pray, that I may never be

found thus sinning against God. And I would invoke my own spirit, and say, "O, my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly mine honor be not thou united." And I would exhort you forever to remember, that it is by works only that the sanctification of the spirit is evinced: and I entreat you never to believe yourselves to have been born of God, nor suffer yourselves to advance to the table of the Lord, whoever may persuade it, till you have had time to examine yourselves, to prove yourselves, and to see whether Christ be formed in you the hope of glory.

III. The subject suggests, that a revival of religion is the greatest blessing which God can bestow on a church or community.

By this I do not mean an array of meetings, nor of anxious seats. I do not mean bodily exercises, nor loud cries, nor immediate admissions to the church, nor an hasty publication of their numbers. True religion consists in none of these things. And a mournful experience of ten years, from 1826 to 1836, has taught genuine Christians, throughout large sections of the country, to withhold their confidence from all those, who, by hasty admissions and publications, seem to say, "Come—see my zeal for the Lord."

But notwithstanding all these things, there is such a thing as a genuine revival of religion. It is not the work of human artifice or machinery, but it is carried forward by the arm of the Almighty alone. This consists in a silent and mighty effusion of the Holy Ghost, on an unusual number of impenitent men; taking the stony heart out of their flesh, and giving them an heart of flesh, and causing them to walk in the statutes and the commandments of God; giving them faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and repentance unto life, and causing them to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, which are

"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;" and helping them to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts—thus giving them evidence of their justification, and causing their light so to shine, as in due time to warrant their admission to the church, and to cause all to glorify God on their behalf.

Nor does it terminate merely in the regeneration of the impenitent, nor in a wild joy amongst those already in the church. All such rejoicing is evil. In a genuine revival, the Holy Spirit increases and strengthens the faith of his children, so that their reliance on Christ gains strength, their penitence becomes more thorough, their love more fervent, their humility more deep. There is in these precious seasons, a growth in grace, which bears a resemblance to those years in which the whole vegetable kingdom seems to advance in an unusual degree. Nor does this advancement disappear, like that which is produced by human excitements; but continues as a permanent growth of the spiritual man —shedding additional lustre over the character, and bringing the whole man nearer to the standard, according to which his heart and life are to be regulated. These seasons are to be estimated only by the perseverance of those who seem at first to be born of the Spirit; and by the actual increase of sanctification in those who had long been in the church. The operation of the Spirit, which produces these things, is affectingly solemn. The house, in which he thus works, seems to stand at the very boundary of eternity. The congregation, on whose members he is operating, seem almost like the dead coming forth from their graves—to meet the Son of Man. The fixed eye, the listening ear, the panting heart, the silent tear, the reverent look—all indicate the presence of the living God, and testify his

power. The solemn retreat from the sanctuary, the opening of the scriptures, the shutting of the door within the closet, and the low voice of supplication, indicate that the Lord is there. And in these scenes he visits his people, and gives them spiritual sight, and hearing, and strength, and he also adds unto them such as shall be saved.

IV. The subject suggests to all saints the importance of calling on God to sanctify them throughout in soul, in spirit, and in body.

Without sanctification, you have no evidence that you are justified before God; nor can your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in heaven; nor can you honor the Son even as the Father; nor can you adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; nor have the peace of God, which passeth understanding; nor have communion with God; nor be useful to the saints; nor a terror to the ungodly; nor be prepared for heaven. And in view of all these things, let me entreat you to cry unto God, that he would work in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. On this internal work of the Spirit, originally creating you anew in Christ Jesus, and perfecting his work by a process of sanctification, depends your state, when the sun, and the moon, and the stars shall be no more. Divest yourselves, then, of all confidence in your own ability, or resolutions, or intentions, and cry mightily unto God for the gracious operations of his Spirit, that your souls may live. And thus, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, may you be brought home to Zion, with songs and eternal joy. For I am "confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

SERMON XIV.

CHRIST A PROPHET.

MATTHEW xi. 27.—"All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."

IT is a trait of our depraved nature to estimate very highly its own powers. This is particularly noticeable, respecting our estimation of the powers of our understandings. There is no other way in which human nature so constantly errs, as in the view which each individual takes of his own intellectual powers. There is scarcely a subject, in the whole circle of knowledge, which he does not deem himself competent to understand, and thoroughly to know. Nor is it rare to find individuals who, though they have never diligently attended to a single branch of human knowledge, think themselves to be masters of all that is known by men of the most expanded intellect. Nor is this confined to the things of this world. The evil reigns with an universal sway over the whole region of spiritual subjects. Scarcely an individual can be found in the ranks of the ungodly, who does not suppose himself capable of knowing, and even actually to know, the whole circle of divine truth, and the whole field of divine knowledge. Is any one inclined to call in question this declaration? Let me inquire, and let your memory answer, whether you have ever found an individual in youth, or in mature years, who, unless deeply affected by the Holy Ghost, inquired after divine truth with the same interest with which he listens to a story, or reads

a narrative, or investigates any of the sciences? Where is the stirring of the understanding respecting divine truth, which is seen respecting the acquisition of any earthly advantage? Where is the docility on these subjects, which seems to invite efforts to teach the things respecting the kingdom, and which appears to say to the spiritual teacher, I need, I greatly need the knowledge of religious truth, and I beseech thee to teach me the things which pertain to the kingdom of God? Why is it that when human science is taught, every countenance seems to have a subdued aspect, every mind to be attentive, and every heart to be interested; and yet as soon as the subject is changed, the understanding of the scholar exchanges the position of a learner for that of a judge; his countenance indicates, that he feels himself to be fully acquainted with the things which are set before his mind; and his heart is manifestly on its guard against being affected by the things which are uttered in his hearing? Nor is this peculiar to one age, or people, or nation. It extends to every part of the earth. It exists everywhere. Wherever man exists, there you will find him cherishing a belief of his own competency to know God; and all that pertains to his highest and best interests. From the philosopher, whose days have been spent in a careful investigation of nature, down through the various gradations of men, till you arrive at the savage who roams in the deserts, you will find the sons of Adam to be too well satisfied with their present degree of knowledge of God and divine things, readily to listen to the oracles of God. And hence it is, that the wisdom of God has always been to the Jews a stumbling block, and to Greeks foolishness. Hence it is, that every species of knowledge in all parts of the earth is readily received, and learned with docility, while the knowledge of God,

and of the condition, duty, and destiny of man, is as readily rejected, and put far away.

In the passage which we have selected to-day, the Lord Jesus Christ is held forth as the great teacher of the character of Jehovah. He is the only being clothed in flesh, who is intimately acquainted with the King eternal, immortal, invisible—the only wise God. He is the only being who is authorized to declare unto men the perfections, the laws, and the judgments of the Almighty. For "all things are delivered" to him "of his Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."

This passage asserts, respecting the Messiah, the prominent fact which had been predicted of him. To the Israelites, after having first spoken of the great teacher whom God should send amongst them, Moses explicitly reminded them of their prayer on the day that Jehovah descended on Horeb, and manifested his mighty power, and caused loud thunders to utter their voices, and vivid lightnings to pour out their flames; and the voice of the trumpet to be heard; and uttered the ten great precepts of the moral law. "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken according to all that thou desirest of the Lord thy God in Horeb, in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, they have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my

words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." This passage, the apostle declares to have been spoken respecting the Saviour; and in reference to this passage he is frequently denominated a prophet, and is said to have sustained the office of a prophet.

This part of the work of Christ, it is our object to-day to consider. Of him in this respect, it is said, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son save the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son." This exclusive and universal knowledge of the Father, which Christ possessed, indicates that he is more than human. What mortal has ever possessed faculties sufficiently capacious to comprehend a knowledge of all the attributes and perfections of the infinite God? What man is there on the face of the whole earth, who is capable of perfectly knowing himself? Where can the individual be found, who is competent to know the heart of his neighbor? Who, then, can think of comprehending in his finite faculties, the infinite God? Divine wisdom thus appeals to man, and demands, "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." It is as impossible for our limited faculties perfectly to know God, as for the bucket to contain the waters of the ocean. And yet we are informed, that our Lord Jesus Christ knew the Father, and that in this respect, all knowledge was committed to him. What else than God could he have been, who was competent to possess this knowledge, which is high as heaven, deeper than hell, and whose extent transcends the bounds of every thing earthly? Who but a being of infinite attributes, can penetrate such an illimitable ocean of perfection

and glory, and be familiar with all its abysses, and accurately declare them to the children of men? If he, who knows what man is, with sufficient accuracy specifically to describe him to others, must be himself a man, must not he be God, who fully knows, and accurately declares the Almighty? This conclusion, a candid inquirer after truth will hardly fail to adopt; and consequently to feel, that he ought to render unto Christ the homage due to infinite majesty.

This, then, is the original character of him, who is set apart by God to be the great prophet of his people.

But what is implied in the term "prophet," as applied to Christ? To this I reply, that the term is not used in the restricted sense, in which it is now understood to be applied, to the men who were commissioned by the Almighty to declare his will. The prediction of future events, seems now to be almost the only sense in which this term is used. And hence, when an individual is denominated a prophet, we desire to know what he has foretold, and whether his predictions have been accomplished. But even in respect to this understanding of its application to the inspired men of the Old and of the New Testament, it ought to be remembered, that it is not co-extensive with its meaning. The term "prophet," in this application, is used to designate an individual, who not merely predicts events which cannot be foreseen by human sagacity, but who is divinely sent and inspired to declare unto men the character of God, their own duty, and their eternal destiny.

The attitude in which our Lord Jesus Christ ought to be regarded as a prophet, is that of being the grand organ of communication between God and man. On this account he is called the "Word." He is the grand channel of communication between heaven and earth; between the throne of the universe, and the erring and

depraved subjects of the Almighty. This office, be it remembered, he executes as the mediator between God and man. Nor ought it to be forgotten, that ever since the fall of Adam, there has been a call for his services as mediator; and he has sustained this relation, both to God and to the human family, ever since the hour of Adam's apostacy. All the instructions which have been given to our fallen world, came, directly or indirectly, through his agency.

The first particular which deserves to be noticed, respecting the character of Christ in this respect, is, that he commissioned and sent forth a succession of prophets to declare the will of God, the character, duty, and destiny of man.

It may have been questioned by many, whether this forms any part of the work of Christ, as a teacher of men. But it cannot be doubted by those who attentively examine the accounts of the teachers of religion, who are celebrated either in the Old Testament or the New, that they were sent by divine authority. It will almost universally be admitted, that they were sent of God. And it will be almost as extensively doubted, whether their appointment and inspiration form any part of the office of Christ as our mediator. But that this is a portion of the mediatorial or prophetical office of Christ, may be inferred from the concession of the whole church. It is generally, if not universally admitted, that all our blessings are procured by him; that through his interposition for us, there descends upon the human family every good and every perfect gift which they receive. This admission, which is evidently a plain inference from the general tenor of the scriptures, includes the fact, that prophets and apostles were commissioned by him, and that the appointment and preparation of them is embraced in the compre-

hensive terms of his office, as the teacher of a fallen world. But if any doubt remains respecting the truth of our position, we may appeal to the testimony of the inspired writings, Eph. iv. 9, 10: "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended, is the same also that ascended, up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." This passage unequivocally asserts, that all these divinely authorized men were given to the church by Christ himself. No real prophet ever came into this world, who was not sent by our Lord and Saviour. No real apostle ever entered on the work of teaching men the way of salvation, without being raised up and inspired by him.

It has been usual, also, for divines to include in the prophetic office of Christ, the operations of the Holy Spirit in awakening mankind, and bringing them to bow in humble submission to the King of kings. But while I am constrained to believe, that this work ought to be regarded as peculiar to the office of the Holy Ghost, I am compelled to declare, that the work of the Holy Spirit is in some respects so interwoven with that of Christ, or so necessarily consequent upon it, that he is, in a certain sense, to be regarded as the fountain of all these gracious operations. And hence, we are taught, 2 Cor. iv. 16, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the

face of Jesus Christ." But in the progress of this work, certain things are attributed to the Spirit. These, though referring ultimately to the work of redemption as their source, are nevertheless described in the scriptures as the peculiar work of the Spirit, and, in our opinion, ought to be thus treated. Though all the teaching of the prophets and apostles, and the inward operations of the Holy Spirit, might here be considered, yet there seems to be a propriety in limiting our remarks to the preaching of Christ. What, then, did Christ teach?

I. He taught the abrogation of the ceremonial law. This law, with its host of victims, had a reference to the shedding of the blood of Christ. When, therefore, his blood had been shed, and a new ordinance had been instituted to perpetuate it, what need was there of the continuation of the ancient rites, which were established only in anticipation of the Messiah? That these were to be abolished is sufficiently plain, from various passages in the writings of the Old Testament. When, therefore, our Lord had come, and had suffered all that had been indicated of him in the old covenant, and introduced the new dispensation, "He blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances, which was against us, which was contrary to us, nailing it to his cross. For if the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. But finding fault with them, he saith, behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will complete a new covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah." In showing that the peculiarities of the ancient dispensation had vanished away in him, he taught, that instead of the Jews alone, all nations were to be the people of God; that instead of the Levitical priesthood, there was to be a ministry appointed by his own authority; that

instead of circumcision and the sacrifices of the Old Testament, there were to be baptism and the Lord's supper; and that instead of the worship by sacrifices at the temple, there was to be a worship purely spiritual. When asked by the woman of Samaria, in what place the Father is acceptably worshipped, he said, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

II. While the Saviour taught, that the rites of the Old Testament were abrogated, he avowed his determination to sustain the religion itself, which had been taught by Moses and the prophets. In his sermon on the Mount, he charged his hearers, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I came, not to destroy, but to fulfil. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or one tittle of the law shall fail." When asked, which is the great commandment of all, he replied, "Hear, O, Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment, and the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Not only respecting the law, but also concerning the way of salvation, he taught the same doctrines which are contained in the Old Testament. Does any one doubt this position? Let him turn, then, to the cloud of witnesses mentioned in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, and he will see that the same principles of faith, which are in the Christian dispensation, are also found in the saints before the coming of Christ.

III. Christ taught all the great doctrines, which are

now maintained by those who fear God and keep his commandments. He taught that there is one God; that his law is righteous and holy; that man, by nature, is lost; that to be saved, he must be born of the Spirit; that he must be redeemed by the blood of the Saviour. He amply taught the necessity of faith, repentance, humility, and obedience. He taught the resurrection of the dead, the separation of the righteous from the wicked, the eternal rewards of the former, and the everlasting punishment of the latter. He taught the unity of the Father and Son, and received from his disciples the name and the worship of the Almighty. He taught the coming and the work of the Holy Ghost, and prepared his disciples for his reception.

IV. The Saviour taught the duties of man more clearly than any other individual has ever done. Those who heard him, said, "Never man spake like this man."

Whoever will examine his sermon on the Mount, will see with what care he swept from the moral law those false interpretations, which, for a long course of ages, had been gathering over it; and how he caused each of those important precepts to stand forth in the simple majesty of its demands. It will there be seen, that instead of regarding religion as consisting in the pomp of ceremonies, or in any external show, he declares it to be in the heart, and pronounces his benedictions only on those whose spirits are subdued and brought into sacred obedience. Indeed, it is wonderful to see how highly he approves and commends a right state of the soul. Instead of approving those who think and speak highly of themselves, he says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Instead of extolling those who feel that they have personally no cause to be sorrowful for their sins, he says, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they

shall be comforted." Instead of commending those who are rigid in claiming and vindicating their rights, he says, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Instead of extolling those who think highly of their own piety, he says, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Instead of commending those who rigidly pursue a delinquent, till the last drop of the vial of justice is poured upon him, he said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Instead of extolling those who are crafty in the accomplishment of their plans, he said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Instead of commending those who are forever sounding the trumpet of war, of whatever nature it be, he says, "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God." Instead of blessing men for the attainment of their own ends, he says, "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, (for doing the things required in the law and the gospel,) for theirs is the kingdom of God."

He taught, that the state of the heart, rather than any external act, gives character to the individual; that internal feelings, even where there is no external transgression, mark out the children of men as sinners in the sight of God. "Ye have heard, that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. Ye have heard, that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you, that whosoever shall be angry with his brother, without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment."

These, as well as numerous other passages, explicitly

show that Christ regards the heart as that which gives character to the whole man.

V. Christ did not fear to teach his hearers, in unvarnished language, that the heart is the source of all their sins, as well as of all their holiness. Matthew xii. 34, 35: "How can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things." Matthew xv. 16–19: And Jesus said, "Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth, is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the *heart*, and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false-witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man." This important truth the Saviour did not conceal, but declared it in all its reality. He never failed to give men clearly to know, that in all the impenitent there is an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. He explicitly asserted, "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh, and that which is born of the *Spirit, is spirit.*" And thus he left on all who heard him, a deep impression of the importance of being renewed in the spirit of their minds, of being born of God, and of becoming new creatures. The evil of the human heart he never hesitated to declare, that men might understand the full extent of their guilt, and the necessity of a renovation by the power of the Holy Ghost. In this respect, he is as explicit as in his interpretations of the moral law, nor can we depart from his explanations, without bringing into jeopardy the whole system of Christian doctrine, and even the salvation of our own souls. Be it

then forever remembered, that Christ taught, that the heart is the source of all our sins.

VI. Christ taught, that all true religion consists in loving God with all the heart, and our neighbor as ourselves.

This is his explanation of the moral law. To love the Lord with all the heart, and our neighbor as ourselves, he declared to be the sum of all that God requires of man. He did not here intend to be understood, that this affection for God and man, will flow out of its own unguided accord, in obedience to the commands of the Most High. Had he thus taught, he would never have given those rules for human life, which he so often inculcated. He knew, that such a state of soul, is pre-eminently calculated to lead men to inquire efficiently for the path of duty. They will not be satisfied, till they understand all that he desires them to do; and their renewed hearts being moved by holy love, will rush forward in the performance of all the things which he commands. Such is the state of the soul, from which as from a good treasure, the renewed man brings forth good things, and acceptably serves God, and his generation.

These are some of the important things, in which Christ is presented to us in the scriptures as a teacher. In this description, we have said nothing of his predictions, except those of the resurrection, and of the final judgment. It would have been easy to cite those which pertain to the destruction of Jerusalem, to his own crucifixion and resurrection, to the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost on the day of pentecost, and to the end of the world. But these are so well known as not to need a particular recitation, and we proceed to draw some practical results from the character of Christ, as a teacher of religion.

And first, he is an example to all those whom he has

appointed and sent to preach the gospel. He never hesitated to tell men their own alienation from God. The grand doctrine of Christ respecting mankind is, that their hearts are corrupt, and from this treasury of corruption there flow forth all the transgressions of which we are guilty. From this storehouse of iniquity there are brought forth a multitude of evil works, which tarnish the glory of him, who was made in the image of God, and expose man to utter ruin. He taught, that in order to the reception of men to heaven, it is requisite that they should be regenerated by the power of the Holy Ghost, and washed in that blood which was shed for many for the remission of sins. These truths, it becomes every minister of the grace of God to inculcate, with the same clearness in which they came from the Saviour. He must not fail to make men understand the evil of their own hearts; the necessity of a most thorough renovation, a renovation effected not by blood, nor by the will of the flesh, nor by the will of man, but of God. He must not fail to urge them to yield themselves to the Holy Spirit, to be renewed in their hearts. Nor may he fail to point them to him who was lifted up on the cross, that by offering himself a victim to God, he might render it consistent with the dignity of the divine government to pardon the offender.

Nor is it allowable so to preach the depravity and corruption of the sinner, as to imply any inadequacy in his natural faculties to do the will of the Almighty; but that all his disobedience, and consequent exposure to eternal punishment, is owing to his own internal perverseness, and alienation from God.

Nor may he so preach as to cause men to suppose, that the Christian religion was designed to make heroes. However much has been said to show, that the Christian ought to be a hero, we are confident, that it is not

derived from the instructions of our Lord Jesus Christ. However much the world may admire the man, who braves his way onward through whatever may oppose him, we may rest assured that this trait of character is not that to which the Saviour gives the prominence. Almost all the characteristics, which he gives of his children, are of a very different nature. The character, which is precious in his eyes, is the poor in spirit, the mourner, the meek, the merciful, the pure, the peacemakers. Those who, when reviled, revile not again; and when persecuted, threaten not. These traits are explicitly mentioned, commended, and even commanded by his inspired disciples. The apostle in Philippians iv. 8, says, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." These, then, were the traits, which in the view of Christ and of the inspired teachers of religion, will be found wherever there is any thing really virtuous, or praiseworthy. To what a peaceful, lovely condition is it the design of the instructions of Christ to bring the children of men! If the traits of genuine Christianity were found in every individual, there would be a state of society even in this world, which would resemble the city of our God above. To produce these traits in the members of the human family, is the grand object of preaching the gospel of God our Saviour. So far as they are found to exist, is there evidence that the gospel is preached, received, and attended by demonstration of the Spirit, and with power. And wherever they do not exist in individuals, or in communities, whatever may be the professions of faith, or the degree of zeal, there the preachers of righteousness are com-

pelled to say, Our preaching is vain; your faith also is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

II. The preaching of Christ is vastly important to all mankind. It is the preaching of him who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. It is the preaching of the best friend of poor, degraded humanity. It is the preaching of one, who knew all things. He had been in heaven. He knew all the blessedness, and all the glory of the world above. It is the preaching of one, who knew all the regions of wo. Coming forth from the throne of the universe, from which may be distinctly seen the pit, "deep and large, the pile thereof is fire and much wood," and whose flame "the breath of the Lord, like a steam of brimstone, doth kindle"—where are distinctly heard the groans, the wailings, and the gnashings of teeth—and where are fully known the horrors of the world of despair; what weight is there in his description of these scenes? It is not uncommon to hear skeptics declare, that we neither know, nor can know anything of eternity—that no one has ever been there to see it, and returned to inform us. But in the instructions of Christ on this subject, we have the testimony of one, who has come from eternity to tell us what there is beyond the grave—of One, whom the Father always heareth, and whom it becomes us always to hear.

We have the testimony of one, whose mighty works proved him to be of God. "For no man," said a ruler of the Jews, "can do the miracles which thou doest, except God be with him." Skeptics can now no longer affirm, that we know nothing of another world, because no one has seen it. Our Lord Jesus Christ has seen it, and has given us a description of those awful scenes in which all the ungodly must soon mingle. Where now

is the skeptic who will venture to declare, that there is no world of wo? Where is he, who, when our Lord Jesus Christ affirms, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment;" where is he, that will dare to rise up and contradict the Saviour? Where is he, who will thus dispute him, on whose vesture and on whose thigh a name is written—"KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

III. The preaching of Christ derives additional interest from the fact, that he is the Judge of the world.

That Christ is appointed the judge of all the earth is declared, Acts xvii. 30, 31: "God * * now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given *assurance* unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Whenever, therefore, we read the discourses of Christ, it would be wise to remember, that he who is now instructing us, will soon come to see what improvement we make of his teaching. We should never fail to carry along with every line which we read, a deep conviction, that the principles which we are learning, are the great principles according to which he who is now, by the gospels, our teacher, will soon as a judge decide our eternal destiny. He will soon appear not as he once appeared on the earth. He will never again abandon the glories of his original character, the splendors of his heavenly abode, the worship of the heavenly hosts, the richness of Mount Zion above; and become poor, that we through his poverty may be rich. He will not at his second coming undertake to persuade men to repent, or induce them to believe; nor will he weep, as he once wept over Jerusalem, over the condition of the impenitent. Jesus, the

friend, the lover of a ruined world, will come to wind up the scenes of this life; to assign to the righteous their eternal reward, and to the wicked their eternal woes. My impenitent hearers, let me tell you, your eyes shall see him in all this glory. Your ears, which are now so slow to hear his commands, his invitations, and his entreaties, must then hear his sentence.

Before this sad scene shall arrive, let me commend to your practical attention a saying of him, who shall soon judge you in righteousness: "Agree with thine adversary quickly while thou art in the way with him." Then shall you be counted worthy to escape those things which shall come on the ungodly; and shall stand justified before the Son of Man.

SERMON XV.

THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST.

1 John ii. 1.—"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

The manner in which the beloved disciple addresses the Christians of his own times, is worthy of special notice. The appellation by which he addresses them, is an exceedingly affecting and endearing one. It is very noticeable, that wherever the Christian spirit prevails, there, a tenderness is found which excludes all harshness and severity. There a sweetness of intercourse reigns, which manifests itself in all the circumstances of life. And in proportion to the prevalence of true religion, it exhibits itself in amiable words and deeds. This is not only discoverable in the disposition of the teachers of religion, but also in those who are taught. Those who are in the possession of the Christian spirit, are not offended by being addressed as if they were mere beginners in learning Christian truth, and in performing Christian duty. The term here used by the apostle, means something more than that the Christians to whom he was writing were dear to him. It was not his object merely to express his attachment to them. He designed to intimate, by the term "little children," that as small children need instruction continually from their parents, so they needed it from him. Little children, also, in beginning to walk, are liable to stumble and to fall. *Not to die in falling, as some affirm,* for they immediately rise and walk, or if they need help,

they cry till their parents or protectors come and assist them. So it is with Christians, especially those in the early periods of their Christian course. They need instruction. They need the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby. They are children, in these respects, much longer than it seems generally to be supposed, and they need to cherish the disposition of children; and to cultivate it, and to receive the instructions of the word of God and of the sanctuary. And with all their care, and effort, and caution, they are liable, through ignorance, or the remains of their evil propensities, to sin in the sight of God, and perhaps in the sight of their brethren. I know that it is not uncommon to find individuals, who seem to suppose that they know their whole duty, and shall hardly fail to walk in it. But the inspired John did not so decide, respecting the converts of his own time. Whether these were superior, or inferior, in knowledge and sanctification, to the genuine converts of our times, it is not now necessary to inquire, nor have we any means of deciding the question; nor if we had, would it be of any importance in our argument, since it is true that in many things we offend all, and there is not a just man on the earth that doeth good and sinneth not. The object of the apostle, in writing to those whom he addressed, was a very important one. It ought to be duly considered by all who profess to be Christians.

"THESE THINGS WRITE I UNTO YOU, THAT YE SIN NOT." What an affecting motive for writing to those with whom he was acquainted, and whom he tenderly loved. How rarely do we think of preventing our brethren from sinning? And yet how important it is that they should abstain from sin. We desire, indeed, that our brethren should eventually arrive in heaven; but how little do we feel the importance, the pressing impor-

tance, of their abandoning their sin? How few are our efforts to withdraw them from the ways in which they are exposed to temptation, to trials of their faith beyond what they are able to bear—to allurements to sin, which they will not easily resist—and thus, through the fewness of our efforts, and the carelessness of our lives, our brethren perish, for whom Christ died. But it was not so with the beloved John. He was afraid the Christians of his own time would sin. He adopted means to prevent them from sinning. He wrote to them not to sin. He presented to their minds those considerations, which are adapted to deter them from sin. It seems to be his prominent desire, not that they should be merely nominal Christians, but that they should really abstain from violating in actions, in words, or thoughts, any of the commands of the Almighty. This he seems to have supposed that they would conscientiously undertake. And yet he had told them, that with all their care and effort, they would not be perfect in the sight of the Almighty. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." But if, notwithstanding all our efforts to abstain from iniquity, we still find that in various ways, unperceived by us, we are drawn into sin; if our corrupt propensities occasionally and unexpectedly assert their control over us; if they lead us astray, even after repeatedly resisting them, and striving to overcome them; and we begin to be discouraged, and to say, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" if we feel that our guilt, in suffering ourselves to be so repeatedly overcome, has become so great, that God will abandon us, and turn away in loathing from us, and refuse to listen to our prayers; if, in these circumstances, we feel ourselves exposed to sink down into the depths of despair, without daring to raise our eyes to heaven for pity or

relief, then we may remember, that there is one who is interested for us, and that "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Though we are unholy and loathsome in the sight of God, yet he is holy and accepted as our intercessor.

I am not sure, that any of you are so distressed with a view of personal transgression, as to feel your need of an intercessor with the Father. I am not confident but a feeling of satisfaction with yourselves may be so prevalent in your bosoms, as to cause you *partially to discard* the intercession of Christ, though, in your profession of faith, you most cheerfully avow the doctrine. "But we hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." And we cannot be persuaded, that there are not some who may be encouraged and strengthened, by viewing the Saviour in this interesting relation to his people.

We come, therefore, to-day, to consider our Lord Jesus Christ, who once died for our sins, who rose from the dead, who ascended on high, and is seated at the Father's right hand, on whose vesture and on whose thigh there is a name written—"King of kings, and Lord of lords." We come, to-day, to consider him as our intercessor with the Father.

The first question suggested, in entering on this discussion, is, In what manner is this intercession made? On this point the scriptures are not very explicit. From the illustration of this part of the mediatorial work, in the usages of the temple, we may learn an important fact respecting it. In Hebrews ix. 7–11, there is a comparison which casts some rays of light on this important matter. You all know, that in the ancient temple there was an apartment, into which none of his people, or of the inferior priests were suffered to go. There was only one being on the face of the

earth who was permitted to have this near approach to Jehovah, and to perform the sacred rites of the place. The apostle tells us, "Into this place went the high priest *alone*, once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people. The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks," "and carnal ordinances imposed on them until the time of reformation; but Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." This representation of the manner in which Christ appears before his Father's throne, is sustained by other parts of the scriptures. In Revelations v. 6, John says, "I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne," and of the four living beings, "stood a Lamb as it had been slain." It was now alive, but it bore the marks of having been once put to death. In this instance, Christ is represented as standing before the throne, by the image of the Lamb, which was slain under the Jewish dispensation as an offering for sin. The lambs slain at the altar as types of a Saviour to come, did not live again, but Christ, the Lamb of God, rose from the dead, ascended on high, and there, before the throne, bears the marks of what he suffered for the redemption of man. The mediator then is represented as going home to his exalted and eternal mansion, carrying his own blood,

and being in the attitude there, which was prefigured on the earth by the victims that were slain in sacrifice. The blood of the atonement, then, is one of the things which enters into the mode of this intercession. But why should we stand at a distance from the full admission of the fact, that Christ really prays for his people in heaven? Why, through an idea that it is incompatible with his divinity, do we shrink back from a full avowal of the doctrine, that he actually supplicates the Father for them? What more incompatible with his divinity, in his doing it now in heaven, than there was in his doing it on the earth? It may be said, that when on the earth he was our mediator. And is he not our mediator still? Did he pray for his people in the days of his humiliation? And has he neglected to pray for them now, when, as our ambassador, he has arrived at the court of heaven? How, then, did he pray when on the earth? Open the Bible, and read the seventeenth chapter of John, and you will see. He lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee." "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me." "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word." "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." "As thou has sent me into the world, even so also have I sent them into the world." "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." These selections from the

prayer of our Saviour, just previously to his crucifixion, show what he means by praying the Father for his disciples, and making intercession for them. And they furnish a key to unlock the meaning of the terms and phrases which describe his intercession with the Father for us.

He promised to pray to the Father for his disciples. John xiv. 15, 16: "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever." Here Christ evidently, in procuring gifts for his people, declared that he should effect it by praying for them. This, then, is to be considered the manner in which he procures favors for those who commit their eternal interests to his keeping.

But lest any one hesitate respecting the reception of this doctrine, I will here adduce the testimony of scripture on this subject.

In the second Psalm, the Father is represented as saying to the Son, "*Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.*" Isaiah liii. 12: It is said of him, "*He made intercession for the transgressors.*"

Hebrews vii. 24, 25. Of Christ it is said, "But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able to save to the uttermost, them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make *intercession* for them."

Romans viii. 34: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

Hebrews ix. 24: "Christ is entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

Having now cited the principal passages which

declare that Christ intercedes for us, it is unnecessary to quote those which have a remote relation to his mediatorial office. And I proceed to draw from the subject those practical suggestions, which ought to engage our attention, awaken our interest, and enkindle our piety.

I. Consider who it is that appears for us an Intercessor in heaven.

1. It is not a poor sinner like ourselves, who has need first to intercede for the forgiveness of his own sins, and then for the people. He is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. No prejudice against him exists at the court of heaven. There he is always welcome, and there he is always heard.

2. He is one who perfectly understands our condition and exposures.

We have not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but has been tempted in all respects as we are, yet without sin. Having been subjected to the temptations of Satan, he knows how aptly they are applied to produce their desired effects. He understands by experience the circumstances and the mode in which the great deceiver assails, and re-assails the children of men. He understands, that if, upon being vanquished by the Son of Man, he did not abandon his project, but renewed his attempt, and again repeated, even in circumstances so hopeless as those of Him who never inherited our depravity, he understands that it must be exceedingly difficult for those whose internal depravity can be easily brought into co-operation with the suggestions and influences of the adversary, not to be led captive at his will; not to be turned aside from the way of righteousness, and thus made to sin against God. He has been in our world. He has, in certain respects, been a member of the human family; and he

has a tender sympathy for the suffering sons of men. Thus he is pre-eminently qualified for his great and glorious work.

3. He is not only in certain respects a member of the human family, and acquainted with their sufferings, but he is, in other respects, a member of the family of God above, and a partaker of the essence and glory of the Godhead. Our intercessor is not only *the infant* of Bethlehem; *the man* of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; *the sufferer*, who said that the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but he had not where to lay his head; *the victim*, who was taken, and crucified, and slain by wicked hands; but he is also exalted above every name, that has been given on the earth, or in heaven; that at the name of JESUS, every knee should bow and every tongue confess to the glory of the Father. He hath, "on his vesture and on his thigh a name written —King of kings, and Lord of lords." As mediator, he indeed condescends to intercede for us; while in his native perfection and glory, he is God over all, blessed forever more.

4. He hath peculiar advantages for the accomplishment of the great object for which he intercedes.

In consideration of his undertaking the mediatorial work, the Father entered into a covenant with him, and secured him a seed to serve him, and promised to give him the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. This broad covenant he can plead with the Father in our behalf. The terms of the promised reward for his humiliation, his sufferings, and his death, he can urge before the throne; and all the veracity of heaven is pledged to hear and to grant relief. He can point to the days of his own agony; he can present his own wounds; he can tell of his own death, endured for those who deserved eternal death;

and thus he can present a motive in our behalf, which heaven will delight to feel, and God himself will honor. And thus his intercession will be always prevalent and successful.

II. The fact that we have such an Intercessor, gives relief to hours of darkness.

There is no real Christian who is not subject to hours of darkness, and days of gloom. Though hypocrites may boast, that they are free from all doubts, fears, and distressing apprehensions, lest they should fail of the grace of God, it is not so with those who have been born again. There are periods when they discover the depths of their depravity, the inaction of their spirits in the service of God, and the slugglishness of their souls in devotion. In these periods it is impossible for them not to be overwhelmed in darkness. The light of life which they once supposed to be kindled in them, seems to have gone. The flame of devotion which once seemed to burn in their bosoms, is apparently extinguished. Do you ask how we know that this ever occurs to the real children of God? I reply, that the evidence of such a condition, even of the man after God's own heart, is found in the Psalms of David. Jeremiah in his Lamentations, and Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, show that they had seasons of darkness like unto the shadow of death. There are moments of so great a sense of guilt, that the Christian knows not what he should pray for. He hardly dares to pray. He fears, that God will turn away in abhorrence from him. In these circumstances, then, it is cheering to know, that he has an intercessor above. It is delightful to read, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Though we feel ourselves to be polluted; though our guilt appear to rise over us like mountains; though like clouds, it seem to exclude the light of the

heavenly world from shining into our souls; yet there is a heavenly consolation, that above all these, near the eternal throne, is Jesus, our friend and our advocate; Jesus, who pities the condition of his people; and prays for their pardon, their preservation from falling, and their final reception into the kingdom of heaven.

III. The intercession of Christ is also an encouragement to every humble believer, that he shall not finally apostatize from God.

I say humble believer, for such a believer trembles in anticipation of an event so dreadful in its nature and effects. While, therefore, this doctrine furnishes no foundation whereon the careless professor of godliness can feel himself to be secure, it is wonderfully adapted to hold up the hands that hang down, and to strengthen the feeble knees. "Simon, Simon," said the Saviour, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." And what a consolation to every saint is it, that even for strength in those trials which he does not foresee, the Lord Jesus intercedes; and thus provides for him a refuge from the storm, a covert from the tempest, or procures for him strength from above, which prevents him from being swept away in the tempest! Under such a leader, who would not thank God, and take courage? Who will not admire the loving kindness and tender mercy of our God?

IV. The intercession of Christ ought to be remembered by Christians, and often invoked by them.

We often hear the members of the household of faith, say to one another, "Do not forget me in your prayers." Indeed, there seems to be an anxiety in many hearts, to have all the people of God remember them in their supplications. Nor is this at all improper, or unchristian.

It is desirable, very desirable, that Christians should remember one another in their supplications. But while we set a just estimate on the prayers of the brethren; while we feel that the prayers of the church are exceedingly important; are we not in danger of overlooking the intercession of our blessed Redeemer? Even amidst all our anxiety for the prayers of mortals, may we not be in danger of overlooking, and undervaluing the intercession of Christ? Who now, in our public supplications, is found crying to Jesus, our advocate above, to intercede for us? Where is the Christian, who is seen to place any real reliance on his appearing before God in our behalf? What means the silence of our public and family prayers on this subject? What means the perpetual reliance on the prayers of God's people, and the perpetual calls for them, while scarcely a solitary cry ascends to Christ to intercede for us? Have we forgotten, that he intercedes for his people? Or, have our views been so unsettled, and uncertain, respecting this important truth, as to have little influence on us? Do we not need a reformation in this respect? Do we not assume in this matter precisely what the infidel assumes in respect to all the favors of heaven, "If the Most High sees fit that we should have them, he will confer them?" Have we not taken it as a settled truth, that even *unasked*, the Lord Jesus Christ will intercede for us in all the instances in which we need help? And may not this be a reason why this precious truth is so rarely mentioned amongst us, and the intercession of Christ so rarely invoked? Ought there not to be an immediate reformation throughout this whole church, in respect to this portion of our supplications? I entreat you, brethren, thoroughly to consider this matter. Lay it deeply to heart. If Jesus is our intercessor, ought he not to be sought? Ought not our cause

to be committed to him? Ought we not to repose our confidence in him, as our advocate? Must we not commit our interests to him in this matter, as well as in every other respect? Come, then, return to Jesus as your High Priest, your Advocate, your Intecessor in the heavens. Commit yourselves to his care. Entreat him to pray for you, as he has promised to do, and then you may expect the richest and most durable of blessings. The impenitent have no Intercessor above.

SERMON XVI.

CHRIST A KING.

REVELATIONS xix. 16.—"And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written—KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

IN our contemplations on the character of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is highly important to meditate on each portion of his mediatorial work. If in the view, which we take of his interposition for us, any trait of his character be overlooked, we shall fail, in a correspondent degree, to yield to him the gratitude which he deserves, to put that confidence in him to which he has a just claim, or to apply to him for the help which is requisite to our salvation. We love to meditate on the fact, that though our Lord was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that through his poverty we may be rich. We love to think on the tender compassion for us, which led him to lay down his life for his people. We rejoice to hear,

that he rose from the dead, ascended on high, led captivity captive, and received gifts for men. But while we delight to contemplate an individual as our friend and benefactor—as enduring reproach and all manner of suffering for us—it is not easy at once to reconcile ourselves to the thought of being subject to his control. It is an element of our native depravity to dread the authority of others. There is nothing, to which an unsubdued heart is so reluctant to yield itself, as to the exercise of authority, from whatever source it may be derived. We love to receive favors, but we love to be free from restraints. This trait of our depraved nature, operates most unhappily on our condition and prospects. For want of a proper submission to authority, the young are often prematurely brought to ruin; the middle-aged subjected to severe inconveniences, and distresses; and even the aged go down with sorrow to the grave. Nor is this true merely of this world. The grand evil in the hearts of men, which hinders their salvation, is their unwillingness that Christ should reign over them. In the concerns of religion, as well as in those of this world, they are always prepared to say, "We will not have this man to reign over us." And hence, it is a distinguishing mark of a child of God, that he is anxious that Christ should reign over him, that he should subdue his heart and bring it into entire submission to the King of kings; and thus control the whole man, and cause him to be conformed in all things to his holy statutes. As far as the corrupt propensities of men have been subdued, so far will they cheerfully hear of Christ their King. The degree in which the corrupt propensities of any individual have been subdued, will be the degree of his delight in Christ as his King, his Lord, and the awarder of his eternal destiny. The heart which is broken and contrite, which has been brought to bow in holy submission

to the authority of heaven, will be delighted to contemplate Christ, not only as descending from his high elevation to endure suffering, reproach, and death for us, but also in his ascending into heaven, being exalted at the right hand of the majesty on high, and ruling till he shall put all things under his feet. Nor is there any sound reason why every human being should not rejoice to know, that Jesus, the friend and the advocate of poor, degraded, ruined humanity, reigns in the armies of heaven above, and does his good pleasure amongst the children of men. That he does thus reign is an incontrovertible fact; for John says, "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire; and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called 'The Word of God.' And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-press of the wrath of Almighty God. *And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written*—KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

The imagery by which Christ is here described as a king, is evidently taken in some particulars from the manner in which the eastern kings were wont to go forth to their battles. This description is applied to Christ merely for the purpose of illustrating his mighty power, and his extensive preparations for the conquest of a rebellious world. He is described as clothed with the garments, wearing the arms, and having the equipage of a mighty military conqueror, that we may under-

stand that he is fully prepared for an onset on the powers of darkness, and the strong holds of sin. And that he is amply qualified for gaining the victory over every enemy of his spiritual government; and for the subjection of every heart to his own control. In the place in his garment, where kings were wont to cause their names to be inserted, as "the King of Babylon," "the King of Israel," "the King of Judah," he, in going forth on his spiritual expedition, caused to be written on his vesture—"King of kings, and Lord of lords." This title is also declared to have been written on his thigh. The sword, with which a conqueror went forth on his enterprize, usually bore an engraving of his name and office: and as this was suspended on his thigh, so Christ is represented as going forth to his spiritual conquests, with the sentence engraven on his sword—"KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

This title is one of very extensive meaning. Other kings are usually content to wield the sceptre over an empire of private individuals. They esteem it to be the height of human elevation to sit on such a throne, and to wield such destinies. But instead of being king over individuals in a private capacity, our Lord claims to be the KING of kings. Princes and monarchs of every degree of power are subject to his control. Before him they all are required alike to bow, to pour forth their gratitude, and to offer a tribute of adoration. This is plainly declared by Jehovah. In Psalm ii. 6, he says, "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break (rule) them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a

potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling." And Isaiah ix. 6, 7, says, "For unto us a child is born, a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever." And David, in the xlv. Psalm, declares of Christ, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a sceptre of righteousness. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness." "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O Most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty; and in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall do wonderful things." The angel who announced to Mary his wonderful birth, thus describes the Messiah: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob *forever*."

But we need not be limited to those passages which ascribe to him this dominion in distinction from the other persons in the Godhead. Though it would be possible to cite numerous passages in which Christ is declared to be God over all, to uphold all things by his almighty power, and to have made all things; though by numerous passages we can prove that, while on the earth, he not only exercised divine power over the bodies and the minds of men, over the legions of evil spirits, but also over the winds and the waves, the storms and the tempests. Though by such citations of

the scripture we could demonstrate him to be King, supreme over man, over good and evil spirits, and over all the works of nature, yet we choose to contemplate him in the attitude of his *divinity*, and to set him before your minds as *the Lord over all.* This is the only way in which a complete view respecting the extent of his dominion, can be acquired. Contemplate him, then, as the mighty God, the everlasting Father; as him by whom the foundations of the earth were laid, and the work of whose hands are the heavens. Contemplate him as invested with all the attributes and perfections of the Deity, and you will see that his control is illimitable, and that his government is without termination.

But, it may be inquired, What is the practical use of this truth? What if Christ be the King of kings and the Lord of lords? In what respects does it alter his relation to us, or demand an alteration of our lives in respect to him?

To this I reply, 1. If Christ be the King of kings, the almighty Ruler of the universe, then we have confidence that all the dispensations of divine providence will be such as to promote the general interests of his people. The scriptures declare that God hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the church. If he who has so loved his people as to die for them, has a control so vast over all that can affect them, what may we not expect him to do for their salvation? Will not he, who by so much suffering, and by such a death, has opened the door of heaven for our entrance—will not he so direct the events which have a bearing on his people, as to secure their eternal salvation, especially when this can be effected only by an act of his own will? Power is given him over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to all whom the Father has given him. And will he not use this power? Will he

not so overrule the opposition of wicked men and wicked spirits, as to promote his own glory and the salvation of his people? And will he not restrain the remainder of their wrath? And when he has authority over legions of angels, who are ministering spirits unto those who shall be the heirs of salvation—will he not send them forth to fly swiftly on their errands of mercy to every fainting saint? And when he wields all the influences of the universe, will he not cause them to conspire to promote the highest good of all who commit themselves to him? Into whose providential keeping ought men more readily to commit themselves, than to one who for our sakes has become poor, that we through his poverty may be rich? Unto whom should they more cordially go, when storms of terror are hastening to overtake them, and eternal death stares them in the face, than to him who hath loved them and died for them?

2. If Christ be the King of kings and the Lord of lords, then we have confidence that he will so direct whatever pertains to our spiritual interests, as to promote and secure our growth in grace, and our final salvation.

Whoever has carefully watched his own heart, and scrutinized its various tendencies, cannot fail to know, that it is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. He cannot but understand, that it is affected, and tempted, and excited to sin, by influences with which he is not fully acquainted, and in ways which he does not anticipate. No one has long watched his own spirit; no one has long scrutinized his own motives, without seeing that he is, unexpectedly and even contrary to his deliberate purpose, led into sin. His evil propensities rise and assert their right to reign; and so powerful is their influence, that he is often persuaded into sin, before he is aware that the feeling which he is indulging, and the deeds which he is doing, are sinful

in the view of the Lord of hosts. So often does this occur in the history of every man who is renewed by the power of the Holy Ghost; and so ineffectual are all his own resolutions and efforts to keep himself from transgression, that he repeatedly cries, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Are there any who are amazed at such a description of the child of God? It is the experience of all who are born of the Spirit. They are almost continually panting for some divine and effectual operation on their own souls, to check their unholy propensities, to subdue their evil tendencies, and to bring their whole inner man into quiet and cordial submission to God. They are sighing for the mighty working of the divine Spirit in their souls, not to give them new truths, but to bring their hearts into a sweet and heavenly conformity to the gospel. But when they meditate on the fact, that he, who laid down his life for sinners, has undertaken this work; when they know that Jesus, who bled, and groaned, and died for our redemption, sees all their struggles, beholds all their groans, knows all their tears, sympathizes in all their apprehensions; is ready to cure all their corruptions, and to cause them to triumph over all their internal perplexities and temptations, then they are prepared to lift up their heads, and to inquire with Paul, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." O, what a triumph over our own evil propensities, and over all the power of the adversary!

3. If Christ be the King of kings and the Lord of lords, then the church is safe.

There have always been serious apprehensions respecting the safety of the church in this world. Her friends have always been far too timorous in her defence; and have *indulged* fearful apprehensions respecting her safety. Where is the individual church which has not been in danger of extinction? Who does not know, that the whole church of Christ on the earth has often been few in number and feeble in resources? Who cannot remember the ark, which bore above the deluge all the piety which then remained on this depraved world? Who does not remember, what a small number of devout individuals there were on the earth when the Saviour came? Who does not know, that for a long period previous to the time of Luther, true piety had almost departed from our world? Who, in the school of Christ, does not understand, that the spiritual church has often been reduced almost to non-existence? And yet, though often on fire, like the bush which Moses saw in the wilderness, it has not been consumed. Nor will it ever be consumed. He who loved the church and gave himself for it, watches with intense interest over all its exposures. He has determined that it shall extend from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. And will he who rules over the universe, and controls all the material and spiritual influences which bear upon the children of men—will he be disappointed? Will he fail to bring home to Zion a multitude whom no man can number, and cause them to shine as the brightness of the firmament and as the stars, forever and ever?

4. If Christ be the King of kings and the Lord of lords, then individual Christians are safe.

There is no Christian who has not a deep anxiety,

under various circumstances, for his own safety. He knows the power of his own unsubdued propensities. He knows the stratagems of the prince of darkness. He understands that Satan transforms himself at pleasure into an angel of light, that he may delude and destroy the unsuspecting children of men. He understands that the adversary also walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. He fears that in seasons of prosperity he shall forget God. He trembles, lest in storms of adversity or of temptation, he shall be driven from his hold and hurled into swift ruin. But when he comes to know that his Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters; that he has power over all the acts of the adversary; that he is able and determined that all things shall work together for the good of those that love him; then he can quietly commit the interests of his soul, for time and for eternity, to the keeping of his Lord. Even in the most perplexing and appalling circumstances he is secure. He who thus commits himself to Christ, can joyfully say, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside still waters. He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake; yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Such are the feelings of confidence which the saints may have in their King.

5. If Christ be the King of kings and the Lord of lords, then his people have no occasion to be ashamed

of their Lord, or of the principles of his government.

Men who have served under illustrious earthly potentates, are not wont to be ashamed of their commanders. Who ever heard, that in the days of their prosperity, any of their subordinate officers were ashamed of Hannibal, of Scipio, of Alexander, or of Washington? And if mankind have not been ashamed to be called the servants of these men, why should Christians be ashamed to be the servants of Christ? Why should they be reluctant to own him as their Lord and their King, who held in existence all the illustrious men of all former times, and before whom they must all stand in judgment? Why should they be ashamed of him, who created the innumerable worlds that move in majesty above us, who sustains us in life, who gives us every good thing which we enjoy; who will watch over our sleeping dust, and call us forth, and judge us at the great day? Why should they be ashamed of him, whom all the excellent of the earth have admired, and whom all heaven adores? Of whatever else we may be ashamed, let us not be ashamed of Christ. No soul was ever yet ashamed of Christ in a dying hour, or on his entrance into eternity. No saint will be ashamed of him, in the day when he shall come in the glory of his Father to judge the world in righteousness. No saint will be ashamed of him, in the day when the heavens shall depart, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. What cause, then, can there be, why any one should now blush to own him? Is he not the King of kings? Is not his government noble and glorious in its principles and in its ends; and administered in righteousness, shall it not continue when every earthly dominion shall cease? And shall not its splendors be unfolding throughout the unceasing duration of eternity?

There is no reason, then, to be ashamed of Christ. His kingdom shall stand, his law shall stand, his gospel shall stand; and unto him shall dominion, and power, and glory be ascribed forever.

Let no Christian, then, be ashamed of Christ. This caution may, indeed, seem to be unnecessary for those who profess to have been redeemed by his blood, renewed and sanctified by his Spirit. But are there no times when your hearts are reluctant to own your Lord —to speak of his power, his truth, or his glory? Are there no times when your allegiance to him falters; and when you almost tremble to be found carefully serving Christ before your generation? If this be so, you have need to be exhorted. Be not ashamed of Christ. Be not ashamed of his character, for it is glorious. Be not ashamed of his office, for he is the King of kings. Be not ashamed of his gospel, for it is the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation, to those who believe.

6. If Christ be so great a King, he ought to be feared.

Men are wont to fear monarchs, whose dominion is extensive and whose power they cannot resist. But the dominion of Christ is illimitable. He wields all the machinery of nature, and can bid the winds, the lightnings, and the tempests, as well as the whole army of diseases, to go forth to arrest, to scourge, or to destroy his enemies. He can turn against them the tide of human passions, and thus overwhelm them in dismay; for even the king's heart is in the hands of the Lord, and he turneth it whithersoever he will. Even our breath is in his hands; and subject to his control are all our ways. He has power to destroy both soul and body in hell. And ought not he to be feared? Ought not the children of men to tremble at his presence?

7. He ought to be adored.

Possessing all this power, and controlling all things

in righteousness, he has a claim on the obedience and the homage of men. He deserves the reverence and the adoration of all who dwell on the face of the earth. These are continually offered to him in heaven. On every side, songs and hallelujahs burst forth unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb. And is it not becoming in those who dwell on the earth, which he has visited in mercy, and where he has wrought the wonders of redemption—and set up a kingdom, which shall exist when the heavens and the material earth shall be no more—O, is it not becoming in them to adore their King? Ought not they to pour forth the loudest notes of adoration? And if they be silent, will "not the very stones cry out?"

8. If Christ be so great a King, his enemies ought to tremble before him.

On every side he is carrying forward the great interests of his kingdom. He rules the world with a power which none can resist. All the material elements and the spiritual influences in the universe, are subject to his sway. And he will so wield them as to promote the glory of his Father, the stability of his kingdom, and the good of his saints. The chariot of his power moves forward. The heart of man, which shall meditate resistance to its course, will fail. The puny frame of man, which shall venture to obstruct its progress, will be crushed in pieces, for he will reign till he shall have put all things under his feet. Those who by grace become his obedient subjects, shall fear no evil. But they who resist his sway shall be subjugated, cast down, and finally and forever destroyed. Who, then, of such as are alienated from God, will not tremble? Who will not be agitated, lest he should incur the displeasure, and be overwhelmed by the just indignation of this great King?

SERMON XVII.

THE MEDIATION OF CHRIST.

1 Timothy ii. 5.—And one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

The subjects to which your attention has recently been called, seem to demand a more particular consideration of the mediatorial character and work of the Saviour. That there has been a mediator in this world is conceded by all except Jews and Heathens. But respecting the precise nature of the work which he has undertaken and accomplished, there has not been even in those to whom the knowledge of this salvation has come, clear conceptions, nor correspondent emotions of gratitude and thanksgiving. Were the case entirely different from what it now is; were the fact of your alienation from God thoroughly understood and appreciated; were your minds brought only to understand your condition, as condemned by the law of the Lord; were the thunders of his power, which utter their voices against the ungodly, to fall in fearful intonations on your ears; were the lightnings of his indignation against the wicked ready to kindle upon you; and were you in this condition to see no refuge from the storm, nor shelter from the tempest, how overwhelming must be your agony? With what distress would you gaze on the greatness of his power, and the infinity of his knowledge, and say, "He is not a man as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment; neither is there any day's man betwixt us, that might lay his hand on us both?" With what

anguish would you look around and inquire for some being, able and ready to rescue you from perdition?

But what, in such circumstances, you would look for in vain, is now declared unto you. You are now taught on the authority of inspiration, that there is one God, and one mediator between God and man.

But, I. What is implied in the idea of a Mediator between God and man?

The fact of a mediation between one man and another, implies a difficulty, which it is not easy to reconcile. This is equally implied in the employment of a government to mediate between two other nations. Such measures are never adopted in the times of peace and of mutual friendship. It is only when the attitude of two nations becomes belligerent, and threatening, and when, owing to unhappy circumstances, it is difficult, and perhaps impossible, for the nations that are alienated from each other, to bring their difficulties to a satisfactory adjustment. It is only when in this attitude, that the posture of affairs seems to require, and the disposition of nations is ready to seek and to accept, the mediation of another government.

So of our attitude to God. The fact, that there is a mediator between God and man, unquestionably proves that there is an alienation, which it is exceedingly difficult to reconcile; that there is a hostility, which prevents a suitable recognition of obligations, and suitable efforts to arrive at that harmony which ought to exist between us and the Almighty; that offences have been committed which are not easily overlooked, and transgressions which are not easily forgiven. That this alienation has risen to such a degree as to prevent, in the present circumstances, all pacific intercourse between the parties on all the points of difficulty, and to portend an unrelenting war, in which man is arrayed

against the being who made him; who continues him in life, in health, in reason, and in the possession of his existence and all his powers.

II. Alienation does not imply criminality in both the parties which are thus brought into conflict.

On this subject a proverb seems to have obtained amongst men, that in cases of alienation there is transgression in both the conflicting parties. "Both are to blame," is a maxim which has prevailed to such an extent, that in cases of difficulty the public mind seems now to be employed only in ascertaining the extent of the evil, and in so dividing the criminality, as that the innocent shall bear as much of the censure as the guilty. Against the admission of this principle in human affairs, I wish here to utter my decided testimony. There is no other principle more unfriendly to sound and wholesome morality than this; and it is far more awful in its effects, when this principle comes to be extended, and applied, as it may be in some instances, to our relation to God.

It may perhaps be important to show the fallacy of the principle itself, against which I am here contending. We are often asked, with a confidence amounting almost to the authority of inspiration, Do you not believe that, in all cases of alienation, there is blame on both sides? To this we reply, We do not, we cannot believe it. If the question still be pressed, we ask our inquirer, Do you not know that there is an eternal alienation between sheep and wolves; and have the sheep ever committed any aggression on the wolves? In what instances have they ever chased the wolves from the fields or the forests, interfered with their enjoyments, wounded their bodies, or slain their young?

But if this instance does not satisfy you, and you allege, that analogies drawn from the animal creation

cannot settle such a question as this, we will go then to the highest class of intellectual and moral beings of whom we know any thing, and inquire whether, in their controversies with the spirits of darkness, the holy angels share in the guilt of the contention. You have all heard of the warfare which goes forward between the angels which kept their first estate, and those spirits which have revolted from God. You have all read of Michael, the archangel, who, when contending with the devil, and disputing about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke thee." And is it not to be assumed, that in this controversy, the angels, who have always been spotless in the eyes of Jehovah, were free from the imputation of guilt?

The Son of God, in the faithful discharge of the duties which he had voluntarily undertaken to discharge, in procuring our salvation, was beset by many difficulties, and involved in many controversies with the Jews; and is it to be assumed that in these controversies a share of the blame is to fall upon him?

Nor are these the only instances, from which it would be possible to draw conclusions which entirely overthrow the opinion, and proverb, against which we are contending. Nothing is more untrue than its universal application. Whilst it must be conceded, that in controversies and alienations, both parties are often blameable, yet this is far, very far from being uniformly, or even generally, true. In most of the controversies which exist beneath the sun, one party, and only one, deserves the censure. Though it is not to be supposed that in human transactions any thing is perfect, yet it is unquestionably true, that, after abatements for the common imperfections of humanity, no blame justly attaches itself to more than one party, in a vast number

of the instances in which the sons of Adam are found in a contention with each other.

We wish it, then, to be distinctly understood and remembered, that though in a controversy, both parties may be censurable, yet this principle can be adopted as a safe one only to a very limited extent, in those alienations which exist amongst men; and is altogether inapplicable to any controversies which may exist between the impure and corrupted sons of depravity, and those beings whose nature and acts are unexceptionably holy.

Pre-eminently is this principle applicable to Jehovah. Of what wrong, respecting us, has he ever been guilty? Who amongst those that have, in former times, charged him with injury, or injustice, has ever been able to sustain it? With what overwhelming argument were those wicked Israelites overthrown, who undertook to maintain that the ways of the Lord are not equal! How quickly and satisfactorily were they answered, who, to account for their own sins, were ready to allege that they were led into temptation by Jehovah! "Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust is conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is conceived, bringeth forth death." The objects around us were never created, and never designed, to be the cause of our transgressions. Our sins are not the result, either of the example of those individuals, or circumstances, which God has placed around us. They are the fruit of our own hearts. They are the regular and legitimate result of our own internal and unaided corruptions; corruptions which have always led us to choose what is offensive to God, rather than

what is agreeable to him; and to do that which he has forbidden, rather than that which he approves and commands. Corruptions, which have flowed forth in one continued, though voluntary rebellion, against Jehovah, and which have led us most cordially to join with all the enemies of his government, and the opposers of his righteous laws; and all this without having sustained any injury at the hand of the Lord, and in general without even the pretence of being abused or injured by him; and not only have we persevered in this course, without any pretence that he had injured us, but while we knew that he was pouring mercies upon us continually, granting us life, and health, and reason, and all things else richly to enjoy. Such has been our course towards Jehovah, and his course towards us. There is an alienation from him in the sons of men, and the causes of this alienation are not mutual: the criminality is altogether with us. We, we only, are the offenders; we alone are guilty; and though this alienation be great in its nature, and threatening in its consequences, yet Jehovah is clear, his throne is clear, his government is clear, all heaven is clear; on us centres, and falls, all the blame; and on us will all the consequences of this alienation descend, unless averted by a mediator.

III. But who is there, that is adequate to undertake the mediatorial work?

In human affairs, there are many individuals who are equally competent to settle a difficulty, and remove the causes of alienation, which exist between a man and his neighbor. And in a great share of the instances which occur, any individual of a multitude, that can be mentioned, is equally as well qualified to undertake the work as any other individual that can be selected. Not so in the work of human redemption. Here there

is but one being in the universe, who is competent to be a day's man, a mediator between Jehovah and his offending subjects. Of all the men who dwell on the face of the earth, even of those who are the most noble, or wealthy; none, saith Jehovah, none can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him. Nor is there any other being, who possesses the requisite qualifications for this heavenly undertaking. When the Son of God was about to undertake this work, he represents himself as searching for others who could perform it. And among all the children of men, and all the angels of God, he found none to deliver, for he declares, Isaiah lxiii. 5, "And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered, that there was none to uphold: Therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me."

This leads us, IV. To inquire why no other being but Christ is qualified for this work?

And here I must frankly confess, that of my own unaided reason, I am incompetent to tell. And I apprehend, that had the family of man been left to ascertain, by their own intellectual powers, what mediator is suited to their circumstances, no one of them would have been able to discover the truth. The anxiety of an individual thus inquiring for the manner in which he might find acceptance with God, is thus affectingly set before us in the scriptures: His agony for reconciliation burst forth in the affecting question, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, and calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression; the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Nor has any one of us ground to conclude, that by our own understanding we

could have advanced any nearer to the truth, or caused a single additional ray of light to go forth upon the darkness, which had settled down on the earth. We are apt to suppose, that our reason is adequate to discover the way of salvation, and decide all the questions which pertain to our deliverance. But on this subject reason is silent. She may indeed be used to discover what God has revealed; but not to fix and settle what it is proper for him to do: nor what victim is desirable as a sin-offering for us. Here we must reverently bow to Jehovah; and receive the instructions which he has given. While we know, that by the aid of our reason, it is impossible for us to tell why no other being but Christ was qualified for the work, let us cast away all reliance on it, in every other respect than simply in ascertaining the thing, which God has taught. Let us go to the scriptures to ascertain what Christ is; and having thence derived a knowledge of his character, let us draw the safe, and the only safe conclusion, that on account of the respects in which he differs from every other being in existence, he is chosen to be the mediator between God and man.

V. What, then, are the respects in which he differs from every other being?

It must here be remembered, that in certain respects he is God. I here refer to his original nature. Of him, John in his gospel says, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God." And lest there should be a misapprehension respecting the manner in which he designed, that these terms should be understood, he immediately declares the sense in which the name of God is here to be understood in its application to Christ; and attributes to him the work of creation, "By him were all things made; and without him was nothing

made that was made. And Paul says of the mediator, that "he is over all, God blessed forevermore;" attributing at once to him the dominion and the name of the Almighty. Nor was he God only. In some respects he differed in his mediatorial office from the Father. He assumed into immediate connexion with himself a human body, and a rational soul. This was done in accordance with the prophets. Isaiah, in prophetic vision declared, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." And John declares the fulfilment of this prediction. After asserting that the Word, or Christ, is the creator of all things, he says, "That the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us; and that we have seen his glory, even the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." These expressions show the union of divinity with humanity in our Lord Jesus Christ; and indicate his wonderful adaptedness to the work of redeeming men from their sins, and reconciling them to God. They show that he, who was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Are we, then, asked in what respects Christ differed from every other being? Is it demanded

in what respect he differs from the Father? We reply, by the addition unto his own glorious nature, of all the powers and faculties of man. He is at once divine and human. Is it again demanded in what respects he differs from men? I reply, he is human and divine. In these respects he is altogether diverse from any other being in the universe. And viewed in this attitude, we may wonder, and say in the language of the prophet, "There is none like unto thee, O God."

Having now learned from the scriptures the qualifications of him who undertook to be the mediator for us, we can see his wonderful adaptations to the work which he has undertaken.

Human salvation requires a thorough acquaintance with all the wants, perplexities, and temptations of man. In this respect, such a mediator as he who has become flesh, is wonderfully suited to our condition. He did not undertake to help the angels. Had this been the field of his operations, a nature purely spiritual would have been adequate to all the exigencies of his work; but he undertook to help the seed of Abraham. "Wherefore it became him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." Here, then, we see an adaptation in the nature, which Christ assumed, to the ends which he desired to accomplish. We have not now to think of him as cold, distant, remote from being affected by sympathy for our sufferings, and pity for us in our temptations; but we have a High Priest who can have compassion on those who suffer; "who, in the days of his flesh, offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him

from death; and was heard in that he feared." Such a Saviour is provided for us: not one that cannot be touched by the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted, like as we are, yet without sin. In this arrangement, we see the wonderful wisdom, and mercy, and grace of Jehovah.

The work of human salvation also requires a thorough knowledge of all the causes, and a complete control of all the beings who have power either to advance or retard it. And what eyes but those which run to and fro through the universe, are competent to see all the wants, and all the exposures, and all the means of relief which pertain to the condition of ruined man? What hands but those which formed the universe, are competent so to direct all the influences of the material and the spiritual worlds, in such a manner as to subserve the welfare of his people, and cause them to conspire together for the promotion of their salvation? What other presence, except that which pervades the universe, can be co-extensive with all the wants of his people who dwell in every part of the earth; who call upon him for aid at every hour of the day and of the night; who die in every section of the habitable globe; whose dust needs to be watched till the morning of the resurrection; whose souls need to be conveyed away to the abodes, which he is preparing for them in his Father's house; and whose transgressions, during every day of their mortal existence, need his intercession before God? What other knowledge but that which transcends all limitation, and is strictly infinite, can be adequate to an acquaintance with the condition, the thoughts, the emotions, the feelings, and the actions of all the immortal beings who inhabit the vast regions of his mediatorship? And what memory short of that to which all past, present, and future things are equally

known, is competent to bring together all the particulars of thought, of feeling, and of action, which constitute the life of a human being; and accurately to weigh in balances the gold and the dross of his character; and not only this, but to extend the process to all the sons of men, all the apostate, and all the holy angels? Whatever may be said of the knowledge requisite to the creation or the government of the works of Jehovah, I have never been able to conceive of a greater amount, or a higher degree of knowledge, than that which is requisite to conduct the complicated affairs of the great day—and award to every man, to every angel, and to every devil, his just and eternal destiny. Yet all this knowledge must be possessed by the Son of Man; and all the powers, to which we have referred, must be held by him who undertakes the work of a mediator between God and man.

This work has commonly been regarded and taught under three separate heads. The first is his office as a prophet. This portion of his work was referred to by Moses, when he said, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me. Him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you." In this office, it pertained to him to reveal the character, the law, and the gospel of God to the children of men, and cause it to be written and preached unto them. It also pertained to his work to open the understandings of his people, that they might know the excellency of the Father and of his Son Jesus Christ; and to open their eyes that they may see his glory; and then to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive the forgiveness of their sins; and, finally, to counteract the blinding and destructive influence of the prince of darkness: "For if our gospel be hid," said the apostle, "it is

hid to them which are lost;" in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them." This is the first portion of his office as mediator between God and man.

The next particular in the work of a Mediator is that of priest. He was a priest, not indeed according to the order of Aaron, but of Melchizedek. As, in the Mosaic history, no priest is named as the predecessor of Melchizedek, so in human redemption there is no other priest but Jesus Christ. And in this priesthood, his work differed widely from that of other priests. They first offered sacrifices for their own sins, and afterwards for those of the people; but he had no occasion to offer sacrifices for himself. "He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." They offered, as victims, the animals which were given for the use of man; shed the blood of lambs, and bulls, and goats, and reduced their bodies to ashes. He offered his own body a sacrifice for the sin of the world. They offered sacrifices frequently for the same individual. He offered his own body once, not merely for the sins of one individual, but for all the sins of all the individuals who believe on him. They offered sacrifices, simply as a shadow of good things to come—as a type of the great sacrifice which was to be offered by the Messiah. He offered himself as a sin-offering unto God, and as the great sacrifice for sin, to which the whole design and use of the former sacrifices had been, to direct the mind and the heart of him who brought his victim. They offered sacrifices, which could not take away sin. He offered a sacrifice, which forever removed from the believer, all exposure to suffering on account of his transgressions,

and brought him into a condition where there is no condemnation. Nor does the mediatorship of Christ close merely with giving himself to be a sin-offering for his people. He is before the throne of the Almighty, as a constant and a glorious intercessor. There he is able to save, to the uttermost, those that come unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. There he is able to save even you, my hearers.

A third particular in this work, is his office as the Ruler and Defender of the people of God. This is called his kingly office. In this respect the apostle, Ephesians i. 22, declares that God "hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the church." And in John xvii. 2, Christ says to his Father, "Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life unto as many as thou hast given him." Angels, by his authority are sent forth to be ministering spirits, to minister unto those who shall be the heirs of salvation. And the prince of the power of the air, with all his legions of mischievous spirits, are arrested in their career, and made to desist from their attempts to ruin his people, and to tremble with apprehensions of their own just and tremendous punishment. To every heir of immortal glory it must be a consolation, that on the vesture and on the thigh of Immanuel, he hath a name written—"King of kings, and Lord of lords."

Such is the Mediator between a ruined world and the Holy One of Israel. A Mediator in some respects divine, in other respects human. A Mediator who, in the scriptures, is sometimes denominated God; at other times he is called man. A Mediator who is set apart, by Jehovah himself, to be the Prophet, the Priest, and the King of your souls; a Mediator whom, if you accept, on whom, if you rely, to whom, if you commit

your immortal interests, you shall yet stand on Mount Zion, with songs and eternal joy.

This subject calls loudly on us to admire the wisdom and goodness of God. What could he have seen in us, or any of our depraved race, that induced him to confer on us such an immense favor as this? Ah, he saw nothing but evil in our hearts, nothing but vice in our deeds. It was not owing to any righteousness in us, but of his mercy, that he saved us. He saw the wreck and the ruins of humanity; and though in us there was nothing which was pleasing to him, though we were hateful and abominable in his sight, yet he forsook not our race, but proclaimed, "Deliver them from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." For the sake of his own adorable name; for the sake of illustrating some of the most glorious perfections that ever dazzled the eyes of created intelligences, he sent forth to our ruined world intimations that the Most High was about to undertake our deliverance. He caused types to be instituted which should prefigure the sufferings and the atoning sacrifice of the Messiah. He caused it at length to be widely and literally proclaimed, that he should be wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities; that the chastisement of our peace should be upon him, and by his stripes we should be healed. Angels were sent to hover over the region of the Mediator's nativity, and to proclaim "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will to men." In the fulness of time the Mediator entered on his work, performed all the labors, and endured all the sufferings which had been predicted of him. O, what amazing condescension! What generous, and noble, and disinterested love! Stay yourselves and wonder; cry out for astonishment, O ye children of men! and let your very souls kindle into gratitude for this noble work of the Almighty.

The subject calls on us, secondly, to consider what our condition would have been, had not Jesus undertaken to be mediator between God and man.

Had not he interfered in behalf of poor fallen humanity, we know not but Adam and Eve would have been written "childless," and swept without reprieve into hell. We know not but they might have been doomed to live a wretched existence, to give birth to others who would have lived lives of similar wretchedness, gone to the same world of despair, and left their wretched descendants to follow on after them in the same way to perdition, till a train of human beings, reaching from the beginning of creation down to the day of judgment, had marched on to the grave, to the bar of God, and to eternal torments. Had there been no mediator, and had we, under such an arrangement, been permitted to exist at all, this must have been our certain doom. No cheering hope could have pervaded our bosoms, nor dispelled the gloom of our prospects. All around us would have been unmixed pain and trouble; all above us would have been the blackness of darkness; all before us would have been the shadow of death. We might have opened our eyes, and looked before us; but what should we have seen?—a lake burning with fire and brimstone. We might have opened our ears, and listened, to learn the condition of those who have gone before us into eternity; and what should we have heard? —the groans, the wailings, and the cries of agony from lost millions, might have fallen on our ears more loud than seven thunders, and more fearful than vivid lightnings, not to warn us to beware, but to indicate our own awful doom. Had we been brought into existence at all, and had we in the supposed circumstances, known any thing of eternity, these, and only these, must have been our apprehensions of the future. O, how affect-

ing, how awfully distressing must our condition have been!

It behooves us, thirdly, seriously to inquire what our condition will be, if we reject the Mediator which God has provided. This is vastly more important than any conjectures, however true they may be, of what might have occurred, had no Saviour come to our world. It behooves us to remember, that there is but one mediator between God and man. Let him be rejected, and there is no other that can help us. Only one sacrifice has been offered for the sin of the world. Let this be discarded, and there is no relief.

And it behooves us also to consider, that if we perish now, our condemnation will be awfully more aggravated than it would have been, had no Saviour come. Now we shall be guilty, not only of disobeying God's holy law, but of rejecting the Saviour. Now we shall be guilty, not only of rebellion against God, but of ingratitude to Christ. And if "He who despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses, of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace?"

SERMON XVIII.

REDEMPTION BY THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST.

REVELATIONS v. 9.—"For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood."

IN this portion of his visions of future things, the beloved disciple seems to have been favored with a view of the throne of God, and of all the holy beings which surround it. The scenes which he there saw, and the heavenly melody which there fell on his ears, could not fail to have an enchanting and enrapturing influence on his soul—to have engraven themselves deeply on his memory—and to have interwoven themselves with all his subsequent views of heaven and its joys; of God and his glory. In preserving for future generations the knowledge which he had acquired in his near approach to Jehovah, he declares, "I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four living beings, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb, as it had been slain." "And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four living beings and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints; and they sung a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood."

The doctrine of redemption by the blood of Christ, is one that deserves the earnest attention of all the intelligent beings in the universe. Especially does it

commend itself to those who have sins to be forgiven, and iniquities to be blotted out. There is no other truth in the whole circle of inspired knowledge, in which the depraved, the sinning sons of Adam, are so deeply interested as in that of redemption by the sacrifice of Christ.

And here it is necessary to state, that according to the scriptures, Christ died a victim to satisfy divine justice, that his sufferings and death were sufficient for the salvation of the whole world, but were designed for the redemption and final salvation of the seed given to Christ in the covenant of redemption.

It is also necessary to say, we must not assume that the whole work of Christ consists in giving himself a sacrifice for us. It is to be remembered, that his life, as well as his death, is to be taken into the estimate, when we attempt to state the whole ground of our acceptance with God. By his righteousness we are justified. By his blood we are redeemed.

With this glorious object in view, the Saviour entered on his work, and toiled and suffered till it was completed. And now the voices of the general assembly and church of the First Born, whose names are written in heaven, conspire to ascribe unto him the honor of their salvation, saying, "Thou art worthy," "for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood."

But here it is objected, that it would be injustice and cruelty in God to suffer his Son to die a sacrifice for sin; and that it is inconceivable that the holy and just God should suffer an innocent and holy being to undergo the pains and agonies which were justly due to the guilty beings who had offended him. Of those who may be pressed with this difficulty, we desire to inquire, Do you not believe that Christ came to this world for the purpose of saving mankind? Do you not admit that

he suffered all that the scriptures relate? Do you not believe, that in his work of benevolence and mercy, he was crucified by wicked hands? Whatever may be the end, therefore, for which he came to this world—whether it was to *die* for the sins of men, or to *lay down* his life for some other purpose, all admit that he suffered death on the cross. So long, therefore, as this is admitted, we cannot see why it is more unjust, or cruel, that he should die for the sins of men, than that he should die to give testimony or effect to the truths which he inculcated. The end is the same, it is the salvation of men. The manner in which he accomplished it is the same, it was by his own sufferings and death. What difference, then, respecting injustice and cruelty does it make, whether he died in one part of the process or another of his work? Whether his death was designed to redeem them from the condemnation of the law, or was intended to convince sinful and erring men that his instructions, so necessary to their salvation, are true? In the one instance, he must have died directly, and in the other indirectly, for the salvation of man. And it is plain, that there is no cruelty or injustice in the one case, which does not attach itself equally to the other. This, then, is no real objection to the doctrine, that Christ died as a sin-offering for the children of men. Nor has it, indeed, any real existence. Were it a reality, when was the time for its discovery? Would it not have been detected at the time of its occurrence, and not in these last days? Who were the persons to detect it? Was not our Lord Jesus Christ the great sufferer? and his immediate disciples, were not they the individuals who would naturally perceive the injustice, and complain of the cruelty? And as on this subject they were altogether silent, is there not reason to conclude, that the evil itself did not exist.

There is, then, no ground for the supposition, that it was cruelty and injustice in God to give up his Son to die for the redemption of men from their sins. And it is our design to show, I. What the scriptures teach respecting the object of his death.

That Christ offered himself a victim for *the sins* of his people, seems to be clearly taught by the types which in the first dispensation prefigured his sufferings and death.

It is well known to you all, that in the early dispensation, victims were offered continually, which had a reference to the great offering for the sin of the world. Fully to understand the nature and object of these sacrifices, it is necessary to inquire into the nature and design of the system of sacrifices instituted in the time of Aaron.

These were not designed to be perpetual. They were only temporary. They were not the substance, but only the shadow of good things to come. They had no power to take away sin; and were used only to illustrate the sacrifice of Christ, which was then to be made for the sin of the world. To derive all the light from the ancient sacrifices, which they are able to cast on this subject, it is desirable to state,

I. That in this system of sacrifices there was a law.

II. There was a penalty.

III. There was a redemption from the penalty.

I. There was a law. This law had no control over the moral conduct of men. It related entirely to subjects which were matters of indifference, or at most of convenience. It required things to be done, which if there had been no law, it would not have been wrong to leave undone. It required men to abstain from things, which independently of the law, it would not have been immoral, or injurious to use. This law related to food,

to dress, to the treatment of the dead, and to a variety of things, which are in themselves altogether unimportant in reference to morals.

II. This law had its penalty. Whoever violated any of its particulars, was held to be unclean. He was not deemed fit to belong to the congregation of Israel. He was not allowed in many instances to associate with them; but was excluded from the privilege of an Israelite till he was cleansed.

III. From this penalty of exclusion, there was a redemption. This redemption was effected by bringing a victim to the tabernacle. There its blood was shed; and it was offered on the altar. After this the individual was pronounced to be clean; and restored to all the rights and privileges of an Israelitish citizen.

Now, as the ceremonial law did not relate to any moral duty, so its sacrifices had no power to remove moral defilement. They were never offered as an atonement for the violation of any one of the ten commandments. They were never designed to purge the conscience from dead works. They were intended to remove only a ceremonial impurity; and to restore an individual only to civil and social privileges. The offences under this law were merely external; the penalty was external; and the removal of the penalty was only a restoration to external enjoyments. It was an external, a material system, designed to teach, and to illustrate, the spiritual system of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, the apostle in Hebrews says, "For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, availeth to the purification of the flesh," (that is, to external purification,) "how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

The ceremonial law, which regulated food, dress, the treatment of the dead, and other things of a like nature, was designed, in certain respects, to illustrate the moral law—the great principles contained in the ten commandments.

The uncleanness, contracted by a violation of any precept of the ceremonial law, as by eating the flesh of an animal which was declared to be unclean, by touching the dead body of a man, or the carcass of a beast; this uncleanness was designed to denote and illustrate the moral uncleanness of those who, in heart or in deed, violate any of the precepts of the ten commandments. It was intended to prepare the mind of every Israelite to feel, that in consequence of his depravity, a stain was left on his character, and a defilement infected his whole moral man; and that this defilement needed to be put away by some means which Jehovah should appoint.

1. The shedding of the blood of victims, as offerings for the removal of the uncleanness contracted under the ceremonial law, was designed to direct the minds of the Israelites to the coming of the Saviour, and prepare them to receive the truth, that he should shed his blood for the sin of the world. The grand truth, which this whole system, with its various and imposing rites, was designed to teach, is, that as the defilements of the ceremonial law were removed only by the blood of the victims which were offered in sacrifice, so the defilements, which are the result of violating the moral law, are removed only by the blood of Christ. This view of the subject is distinctly recognised and affirmed by Paul, in the ninth chapter of the Hebrews. In speaking of the tabernacle erected in the wilderness, with its services, he declares, it "was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, which

could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience." By this he means to say, that these offerings availed nothing in respect to internal purification. They did not answer the object of making reconciliation to God. They were only a figure of the great victim, who, by his own blood, should make atonement for moral offences. But he proceeds: "Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come," (that is, an high priest of the gospel dispensation,) "by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, (that is to say, not of this building); neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Here, then, we are explicitly taught, that the design of the shedding of blood, in these sacrifices, was to prefigure the shedding of Christ's blood for the redemption of men from sin. This, then, is the meaning and testimony of the whole system of sacrifices under the first dispensation.

That the object of the death of Christ was to make propitiation for the sins of his people, is manifest,

2. From the prophecies.

It ought to be here stated, that the prophecies respecting the Messiah are of two classes. The first class comprehends those which, by sensible objects, prefigure his coming, his sufferings, and his death. Of this kind are all the sacrifices and offerings, respecting which we have just spoken. The reason why this grand doctrine was thus taught, is to be sought in the condition of mankind at the time when the system prevailed. It was the childhood of the world. Men were then almost universally instructed by the use of material objects, which bore some resemblance to the things which they were intended to teach. In those periods, there were, so far as we know, no books except those portions of

the scriptures which were then written; and, of course, the art of reading and writing were almost unknown. If this truth was to be taught at all, it must be taught either by words, or by sensible signs. An attempt to teach this, or any other truth, by words alone, in such a period, and to such a people, must have been preposterous. And hence, we find in this, as in all other cases where God has undertaken to teach men, a wonderful manifestation of wisdom. Instead of causing this great event to be predicted by the utterance of a single sentence, he caused a system of signs to be adopted, which, by their influence on the senses, on the understanding, the memory, and the feelings, was calculated to preserve it in fresh and living remembrance in every mind. The ancient sacrifices amongst the Jews were precisely, in respect to a Messiah to come, what the Lord's supper amongst us is, in reference to his having come, and suffered, and died. Does the bread and wine refer us to his body broken, and his blood shed for the remission of sin? So the blood of the ancient sacrifices led the devout Israelite to look with confidence to a Redeemer, who should shed his blood for our transgressions. Every injunction on the Israelites to offer sacrifices, is therefore to be regarded as a prediction of the Messiah. And every instance in which this ordinance was carried into effect, by the authority of God, is to be regarded as a repeated prediction of his coming, his suffering, and his death for sin. Let it then no longer be said, that the early parts of the Old Testament do not contain this truth. According to Paul, in the Hebrews; yes, according to Paul, who wrote as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, these rites are declared to signify and to illustrate the death of our Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sin. How vastly numerous, then, are the predictions in the early por-

tions of the scripture, respecting him who came, and suffered, and died for us!

But this doctrine is taught not merely by types. Though in that period this was the most effective mode of teaching, yet, in process of time, God caused it to be declared in plain and literal terms. Thus in Daniel, chap. ix. 24–26, Gabriel declares, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy." "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself." And Isaiah l. 6, represents Christ as saying, "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair." And in the fifty-third chapter of the same prophecy, Isaiah says of the Saviour, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid, as it were, our faces from him. He was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "And he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." These passages plainly assert, that Christ died as an offering for our sins. Nor are these the only instances in which this great truth is taught in the scriptures. It would be easy to find many other passages in which this doctrine is clearly declared.

But these are sufficient to show, that the prophets regarded Christ as a Lamb slain for the sins of men.

3. Our Lord Jesus Christ declared, that he came into the world to die for the redemption of men. Mat. xx. 28: "Even so the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." In John x. 14, he said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." The faithful shepherd, in eastern countries, did not desert the flock, even when the lion and the bear came to devour them; but rather than suffer them to be lacerated and destroyed, he pursued, even at the peril of his own life, the beasts of prey. So our Lord Jesus Christ, when Satan had broken into the enclosures of God, and had perverted the whole human race, did not leave them to perish by his influence, but undertook to rescue them from his grasp, even at the expense of his own life.

At the institution of the Lord's supper, he is represented, by the evangelists, as taking bread, blessing it, breaking it, and giving it to his disciples, and saying, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my blood, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins." What language can declare more clearly than this, that our Lord Jesus Christ shed his blood for the redemption of men from their sins?

4. The apostles, in all their representations of this subject, explicitly declare the same truth.

The apostle, in Acts xx. 28, charged those who have the oversight of the people of God, "to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased by his own blood." In 1 Cor. xv. 3, Paul says to the Corinthians, "I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scrip-

tures." Romans iv. 25: He "was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." Hebrews x. 12: "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God." 1 Peter iii. 18: "For Christ also hath suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit." 1 Peter i. 18–20: "Forasmuch as ye know, that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." And Paul, in the Galatians, says, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life, which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

5. That Christ died for our sins, is the testimony of the redeemed spirits made perfect in glory.

In his visions of the world of glory, John says, Rev. vii. 9, "After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four living beings, and they fell before the throne upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are

these, which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

In the twelfth chapter of the Revelation, John says, "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb." And of those whom he heard singing a new song, he says, "These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and the Lamb."

To these positive assertions we may add other portions of the fifth chapter of the Revelation.

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living beings, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

Add to all these the fact, that wherever Christ is called "the Lamb," it is with reference to the lamb which was offered in sacrifice for offences committed under the typical law; and indisputably indicates the fact, that he was the victim, whose blood was shed for the remission of sin.

Contemplate now the amount of this evidence, that

Christ died a sin-offering for us. It was predicted by a system of types, in which the blood of victims was shed for the remission of certain offences, prohibited, not indeed by the moral law, but by a system which was designed to illustrate it. This truth was literally declared by the prophets. It was taught by the Saviour. It was inculcated by the apostles. It employs the tongues and the harps of all the saints made perfect in glory. And when you have meditated on all these sources of evidence, tell me, is it not complete? In what manner could it have been made more explicit? What combination of types or of declarations could have made it more clear? As a truth, it stands forth with greater prominence than any other truth in the whole circle of the inspired records. As a fact, it is the most important that men have ever learned, or angels ever known. It is a fact in which we are more deeply interested than in any other fact, or in all others combined, since the foundation of the world.

But it may be asked, what is the practical use of this doctrine? To this I reply, 1. It is calculated to show us our real condition by nature.

Thus the apostle reasoned from it: "If Christ died for all, then were all dead." Without Christ, what should we have been? Ah, brethren, in respect to the possession, or the hope of spiritual life, we should have been in a condition as far removed from it, as a cold corpse is from labor, pleasure, or breath. Without him we were dead, irrecoverably dead. The whole human family were a vast valley of dry bones, upon which no breath of the Lord could ever blow; no bone could ever be united to his fellow bone; no sinews, no flesh could ever come upon them; no breath could ever be breathed into them; and no life could penetrate them. We were all spiritually dead,

and we must have remained forever dead. O, how humiliating was our condition! How appalling our state! Natural death but a little before us; spiritual death already upon us; eternal death hanging over us, and ready, with its immeasurable and eternal horrors, to descend upon us. And without a mediator there was no door for our escape. But now, through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ for us, a way is opened for our deliverance. For us, yes, *for us*, the Son of God has come, and suffered, and died, that by his sufferings and death we may be delivered, through faith, from the woes which we had incurred.

2. This truth ought to render Christ pre-eminently dear to his people.

The blessings, which you enjoy, are not the result of any righteousness in you. Ye were dead in trespasses and sins. And when thus dead, Jesus Christ gave himself to be your ransom. Yes, while ye were yet enemies, in due time he died for you, that by his death he might reconcile you to God. Had it not been for his death, ye would have been enemies still. Ye would have been carrying on an unequal war with the Almighty—a war in which you were destined to be overcome, to be vanquished, to be slain—and yet to live and linger in your agony through eternal duration. Whenever, therefore, you think of deliverance from this tremendous doom, and meditate on the manner in which your salvation was secured, ought you not to set a high estimation on him who hath loved you and given himself for you? Ought not his character continually to awaken in you feelings of admiration? Ought not his work, his sufferings, and his death, to be associated in your minds with the kindest and the tenderest recollection of your existence? And shall not the very name of Jesus be sufficient to awaken the warmest emotions of love,

the most devout thankfulness, and the most unreserved and cordial dedication of yourselves to his service? And at every mention of Christ, shall not every unholy feeling hide itself in shame? and every selfish passion be hushed into silence? and all your worldliness sink to rise no more? and every earthly tie, however strong, *become* FEEBLE, compared with this? Whenever the kind and condescending, the great and adorable name of Jesus falls on our ears, let our best, our noblest affections flow forth at the sound, and let our hearts be wrought into an ecstacy of love and gratitude.

3. His death ought to be commemorated with a living thankfulness, and celebrated with correspondent tokens of dedication to him.

It is usual amongst men to set apart seasons in which they will celebrate great events in their history. The same practice obtains respecting nations. But if it be commendable to celebrate the exploits of the benefactors of nations—if it be proper to commemorate the day in which a nation is delivered from servitude—what shall we say of the transaction, by which the way is prepared for the deliverance of men from the dominion of the prince of darkness, and from a destruction as much more awful than any human calamity, as eternity is longer than time! O, if the interesting scenes of this world deserve for a single day to be commemorated with joy, what celebration can be compatible with the acts of the Messiah! What time ought to be spent in the preparation! What efforts ought to be made, to awaken every tender sensibility of the heart! What strong feelings of gratitude ought to rise, and flow forth from every bosom! What tears of thankfulness ought to fall from every eye! What heavenly serenity should sit on every soul! Instead of being, as it often is, a scene almost of terror, every power of the heart should kindle

into love and thankfulness, and every tongue should utter its thanksgivings. Why should not the most wonderful fact in the whole history of man—the most blessed transaction of which the universe can speak—why should not this transaction be remembered with living delight, and all its particulars be commemorated with unearthly joy!

4. This remembrance of the sufferings, this commemoration of the death of the Saviour, is a special qualification for the world above.

There, the Saviour, his work, his sufferings, and his death for the sins of the world, is the theme of constant and eternal commemoration. On every side, the shout breaks forth, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his blood." Every redeemed heart in heaven, unites in these feelings of gratitude and praise. Every tongue is employed in celebrating this noble work. Every golden harp among the ranks above, is used to swell the note of thankfulness, and to increase the melody of the song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and has redeemed us unto God by his blood."

And shall not every heart in this distant world, in which all these wonders of salvation were wrought, yield itself to the sweet and heavenly influence which comes in upon it from all the fountains of eternal life? Shall not every tongue, that expects to sing the song of Zion above, *here* begin the heavenly note? Shall not every hand, that desires to use a golden harp in the city of our God, *here* begin the sweet, the heavenly melody? *Here* is the place, where men must be fitted to be citizens of the Jerusalem of our God. *Here* they must become accustomed to the employments of the regions above. The rudiments of these high, these elevated strains, are to be learned in the schools which God has

established on the earth. They are taught only in the church below. *Here* you must learn, if you would ever know, the notes of the song which shall forever be sung around the throne of God: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his blood." Unless you learn them *here*, you will never be able to find admission to the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven.

My impenitent friends, will not you learn this song? It is a sweet, a heavenly song. It is a song that will be forever fresh and enchanting. The ages of eternity, as they roll on in ceaseless duration, will wear away none of its interest, and destroy none of its melody. It can charm away many of the evils of this life, and it can fill all eternity with *ecstacy*. But it must be learned, not merely by the *understanding* and the *memory*, but by the *heart*. With the *heart*, man believeth unto life. And now I desire to repeat, in your hearing, this great leading truth, that our Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to prophecy. Him, who once suffered for your sins, I this day preach unto you, as *risen*, and seated at the right hand of the majesty on high, there to give repentance and remission of sins. To him I would lead you. Before him I would declare unto you, that through him, that is, through his blood, there is remission of sin. And in his stead, and through his blood, I would *entreat* you to be reconciled unto God.

SERMON XIX.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

LUKE xxiv. 6, 7.—"He is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

You will all remember, I recently undertook to show that our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified and slain as a sin-offering for the world. At the close of that day of agony, in which he gave up the ghost, his body was hanging on the cross. The popular feeling, which had vociferated, "Crucify him, crucify him," was now hushed into an affecting stillness. The opinions of men respecting him were rapidly undergoing a change. A Roman centurion, who had gazed on the transaction—who had seen the sun hide his face, and the darkness invade the earth—who had felt the earth quake, and seen the rocks rent in pieces, seems first to have broken the silence, and said, "*Certainly this was a righteous man.*" The same conviction respecting his character, rapidly settled down upon the mind of every man who had witnessed the scene. A vivid flash of truth respecting their own guilt in crucifying him, seems to have penetrated each of their souls, for "All the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned."

When the multitude had thus retired, and forsaken the body of the Saviour, a man named Joseph, a counsellor, a good man and a just, who had not consented to the counsel and deed of the Jews in demanding his crucifixion, but himself waited for the kingdom of God—

this man of Arimathea, went unto "Pilate and begged the body of Jesus; and he took it down and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid, and rolled a stone to the door of the sepulchre."

But, notwithstanding the deep conviction which seemed spontaneously to engrave itself on the hearts of the Roman soldiers, and the Jewish populace, that Jesus was a just man, and a prophet, and which caused them to retire in silence and awe, from the place, there were others who had not been moved by any of the phenomena which had rendered the scene of the crucifixion so affecting, so grand, and so awful. The chief priests and pharisees came together unto Pilate, and said, "We remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead, so the last error shall be worse than the first. And Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch, go your way, make it as sure as ye can." Thus, by the authority of the Roman governor, the high priests and pharisees were commanded to go and secure the sepulchre by an armed band, against the intrusion of mortals; and they went and made it sure. They *sealed* the stone. This was probably done by the *ring* of Pilate, that being thus closed by the authority of the governor, no one might dare to open it. A guard was placed around the tomb to repel every aggressor; and thus the body was deemed to be secure from any who might wish to take it away.

A few timorous, defenceless females, who, when he was in Galilee, followed him and ministered unto him; and many other women, which came up with him unto

Jerusalem, and had been gazing, afar off, on the sad scenes of the crucifixion, lingered in the rear of the soldiers. The affections, the sympathies, and the gratitude of Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joses, were so strong, that they watched the transactions, and beheld where the body was laid, and then departed.

Now, all was secure. The impious priests and the haughty pharisees retired with satisfaction, that the disturber of the nation was no more; and with the full conviction, that from his grave nothing could be brought forth to produce additional agitation amongst the people. He, whom they most dreaded, was now cold and lifeless. His body was enclosed in a sepulchre of hewn stone. A rock had been rolled to the door, which it would not be easy to move. The Roman seal, which it was unlawful to break, had been set upon it; and a company of armed men, ready to inflict death on any intruder, stood around the sepulchre. One night passed away in silence. The next day nothing occurred to disturb their security. Another night came, and had almost gone, when a scene, whose interest has never been, and never will be exceeded till the trumpet of the archangel shall sound, began to be opened.

Though the timorous and weeping women had retired from the sepulchre, there were other friends who still lingered around his body. They, who on his first entrance into our world, hovered over the plains of Bethlehem, and sang, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will to men," had not now forsaken him. "And behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him

the keepers did shake, and became as dead men." O, how powerless are human arms when arrayed against the arm of the Almighty! How flexible even the soldier's heart, amidst the thunders of divine power! How useless are human weapons, when employed in a war with the purposes and the operations of omnipotence!

To the trembling and agitated soldiery, the angel spake no word of consolation. Though so much moved as to be convulsed, and to be as dead men, the angel proceeded with his work, till Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome came, bringing sweet spices that they might anoint the body of Jesus. And as they approached, inquiring of one another, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" the heavenly messenger replied, "Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall *ye* see him; Lo, I have told you." "And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled, and were amazed; neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid." And when they found the eleven they told them, and all who were with them; "And their words seemed as idle tales, and they believed them not." "Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre, and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves; and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass."

Nor were these the only persons who bore the news of the morning from the sepulchre. Some of the guard, recovering from their agitation, hastened into the city, and told the chief priests all the things that were done.

One would suppose, that here they would have stopped, and pondered their ways. One would think, that their opposition to Christ and his doctrines would here have ceased. But instead of this, they contrived new devices, by which they might countervail the effect of his resurrection on the public mind. For this purpose they assembled. They took counsel. They gave large money to the soldiers, and procured them to say, "His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept,"—a statement, whose improbabilities were never exceeded, and whose falsehood must have made every one of their tongues to tremble. What cause must not be a bad one, which is sustained only by the testimony of men, who acknowledge themselves to have been asleep when the facts occurred, respecting which they testify? And yet this is the only testimony that has ever been alleged, to disprove the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour;—the testimony of men, confessedly asleep! The testimony of men, who explicitly declare a fact, which, if it be so, conclusively disproves all their assertions, and shows that they neither knew, nor could know the thing which they assert!

Still it may be necessary to allude to the argument, which conclusively shows, *that he was raised from the dead.* On this hangs all our hope of immortality. This is explicitly affirmed by the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 17–20, "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also, which are fallen asleep in Christ, are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead." As the resurrection of Christ is believed chiefly on the authority of his disciples, it is desirable to inquire respecting the circumstances in which they spoke.

I. They did not expect that he would rise from the

dead, nor believe that he had risen, even when it was told to them.

Though our Lord Jesus Christ had frequently alluded to this scene, and explicitly told them, the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, "And shall be mocked and spitefully entreated, and spitted on, and they shall scourge him, and put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again, they understood none of these things; and the saying was hid from them; neither knew they the things that were spoken." So deeply were they imbued with the idea that Christ was to be a temporal prince, and restore the ancient grandeur to the Israelites, and cause their power to be felt to the ends of the earth, that they were poorly prepared to receive the doctrine, that he should be put to death by wicked hands, and afterwards should rise from the dead. So completely was this truth at variance with all their opinions, and feelings, and prejudices, that it was never received nor understood by them. And hence, his crucifixion extinguished all their hopes, and caused them to feel that they had been mistaken in supposing him to be the Messiah. They had no expectation that he would rise from the dead; and consequently, when told that he had risen, they were not prepared to believe it. The words of Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and of the other women, to whom the angel declared his resurrection, seemed to them as idle tales. When Jesus joined himself to two of them, as they were journeying towards Emmaus, and holding a mournful conversation respecting his crucifixion, they said, "*We trusted* that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women of our company made us astonished, who were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not

the body, they came, saying, that they had seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive." And notwithstanding he had made himself known to these two disciples, and they had communicated the fact of his resurrection to the rest, yet when he met them they were terrified, and supposed they had seen a vision. So slow were they to believe what they had been told of his resurrection, that they were ready to suspect even their own senses. Nor do they seem to have been convinced that he had risen, till he showed them his hands and his feet. And yet there was one of their number who was not with the company when Christ showed himself to them; and so strong were his convictions, that the communication of his resurrection was entirely without foundation, that the testimony of the whole school of the apostles, who told him, "We have seen the Lord," was insufficient to produce in his mind a belief of the fact. Nor could his doubts be removed till the Saviour told him, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing." And were these men predisposed to be deceived respecting his resurrection? What men have ever been more careful and guarded against imposition? What examination has ever been more thorough than this?

II. They could gain nothing by asserting it, if it were untrue.

If it were true, it is easy to see that they had a strong motive for asserting and maintaining it. If he were indeed risen, then his doctrines are true, and their confidence in him as a mediator between God and man, was justly reposed. But if he were not risen, then his doctrines were false, and their faith in him was unfounded. And what could they gain by preaching a system which they knew to be untrue, and by encouraging hopes

which they knew would perish? Moreover, they would have carried in their minds an affecting conviction, that they were inculcating falsehood. Yea, said the apostles, if Christ be not risen, "we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up." With this consciousness of being false witnesses, and the affecting sense of guilt which must have accompanied it, what could they expect to gain by continually asserting that Christ had risen from the dead?

If they had stolen the body, as the soldiers affirmed, what an appalling conviction of their guilt, in declaring his resurrection, must have searched every corner of their souls? What a refutation of their statement must every view, and every remembrance of it, have been? And if they had not obtained possession of it, how could they know but the body, not yet decayed, would be publicly produced, and their claims thus demonstrably refuted?

And even if they were secure from detection, what earthly object could they expect to gain by declaring that he was raised from the dead? They had seen him apprehended, mocked, scourged, spit upon, and crowned with thorns. They had known that he had been crucified. They knew, too, that the disciple is not above his Lord. They had no reason to expect better treatment from the populace, nor more protection from the government, than their Lord had received. As a consequence of declaring his resurrection, they could foresee only affliction, reproach, and death. And can you suppose that eleven men could combine to declare, and continue to declare, at all this risk, what each one of them knew to be false? Without the fear of contradiction, we boldly affirm, that no such instance is found in the annals of man. As they could gain nothing by

representing him to be risen, if it were untrue, but were exposed to innumerable sufferings, and unavoidably to death itself, there can be no ground for suspicion, that they gave themselves over to the inculcation of a falsehood.

III. The disciples were as well qualified as any other men, to know whether the things which they affirmed were so.

The subjects respecting which they testified, were cognizable by the senses. Had they been dark, abstruse principles—had they been some rare phenomena in the material world, but removed from inspection by the several senses, there would have been reason for suspecting their capacity to know, and fully to comprehend them. But who does not see, that the man merely of common sense and understanding, is as well qualified as any other person, to decide whether an object, which appears to be a man, is a phantom, or has flesh and blood, and bones? And who can doubt his knowledge of the fact, especially after having seen the individual with his eyes, handled him with his hands, heard him speak with his ears, which had long been accustomed to his voice, known him in giving thanks, seen him eat food, which was set before him, and heard him explain important portions of the scriptures? In these circumstances, no man of common understanding can be mistaken. Disinclined as the disciples were to believe his resurrection, foreseeing only injury in the promulgation of the idea that he had risen, and being fully qualified to know the truth respecting it, there is ample reason to believe all their assertions respecting this event.

IV. Christ appeared to them many times. Had he appeared but once, there would have been a legitimate call for suspicion; and we should then have been compelled to scrutinize every particular of the description, to see

whether they might not have been mistaken. But instead of coming once, like the fabled ghosts, he showed himself openly, first, to Mary Magdalene and other females; next, to Peter; afterwards to the disciples going to Emmaus; fourthly, to James; then to the ten disciples, in the absence of Thomas; sixthly, to the eleven disciples, Thomas being present; next, to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; eighthly, to above five hundred brethren at one time; and finally, he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifted up his hands and blessed them; and there was parted from them, and ascended up into heaven. Now in these numerous instances, and under these various circumstances, being seen of them forty days, and speaking with them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, there was opportunity to detect a mistake, which might have been made in a single interview. And not only did he hold conversations with them, but he evinced that he still had need of being nourished by the same food which is found to be necessary for the sustenance of others. He asked them, "Have ye here any meat? and they gave him a piece of broiled fish and of an honeycomb; and he took it and did eat before them." What facts more clearly than these, can show that he had actually risen from the dead?

V. There is one more circumstance which gives weight to the evidence that he had risen. This relates to the manner in which he at various times appeared to his disciples and others, who were associated with him.

The circumstances in which men's imaginations are wrought into the belief that they have seen spirits, are very peculiar. Except in cases of disease, they are not infested with these unfounded notions in open day, and in the society of their friends. No; it is in the gloominess of evening, or the darkness of night, that their

imaginations form images which terrify their souls. The regions of the dead, the burial places of our acquaintance, and the scenes of some tragical event, are the favored retreats of these terrors. It is when man is alone in these regions, that he feels a chill stealing upon him, his hair rising and standing almost erect, his heart beating with rapid pulsations, his eyes fixed on some unreal existence, and his ears listening to sepulchral tones. But never in the enjoyment of health, in open day, and amongst tried friends, have men been known to be afflicted by these creations of their own minds. Now, it was not in scenes like these that Christ appeared to his disciples. Though to Mary and some of her attendants, he made himself known on the morning of the resurrection, yet in his first interview with two of his disciples, they were travelling on the way to Emmaus, and he was known to them in the breaking of bread. He met them in an inner chamber; and instead of holding them at a distance, and eluding their investigation, he showed them his hands and his feet. He met them on the shore of the sea, and held conversation with them. He showed himself to about five hundred at one time. And in most of these circumstances, it is utterly impossible, for the imaginations of men to form images which they might mistake for living beings. Nothing but a living man could perform the various things which the disciples have attributed to Christ. And whether this living man could be any other than he who had been their Lord and Teacher during three years; whether he could be any other than he whose hands and feet had been pierced by the nails, judge ye.

Such, then, is the evidence that our Lord rose from the dead. It is declared by individuals who were not predisposed to believe it; who could gain nothing by asserting it, if it were false; who were qualified to know

whether the things which they declared respecting it, were true; who had seen him many times after his resurrection; and whose testimony has additional weight, from the absence of every circumstance which is calculated unhappily to operate on their imagination.

1. The resurrection of Christ must have been a matter of great joy to his disciples.

For three years they had followed him as their teacher, their protector, and their friend. For him, they had left houses and lands, wives and children. For him, they had endured toil, and hunger, and reproach—and all this in expectation of blessings not yet unfolded, and of a kingdom not yet acquired. However they may have misunderstood the nature of the kingdom in which they were to sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel; however much of earthliness there may have been in their anticipations; none can doubt, but they were expecting a rich and glorious inheritance. For him, they were ready to put their lives in jeopardy. For him, one of their number drew his sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. For him, they would unquestionably have gone forth to war, and lost their lives in his defence. But when they were forbidden to defend him by the sword, and were compelled to see him taken by a rabble with swords and staves; when they saw him led away as a lamb to the slaughter, they forsook him and fled. One, indeed, followed him to see the end, but when interrogated, replied with an oath, that he knew not the man. They knew the workings, the insults, the scourging, the crucifixion, which he endured. They knew that he had died, and with the extinction of his life, all their hopes were also extinguished. They had no other expectation, than that of being regarded, to their dying day, as the fol-

lowers of one, who had improperly claimed to be the Messiah. With this feeling of dejection and mortification, they expected to live and to die. They had no expectation that he would rise from the dead. And when told that he had risen, they did not believe it. But when this truth was fully established, their hearts rushed forth in tones of exultation. Gladness reigned in their souls, and Thomas exclaimed, "*My Lord and my God.*" O, how changed were their prospects! Now, instead of looking forward only to days of shame, and years of disgrace, they began to anticipate glory, and honor, and immortality.

2. The resurrection of Christ establishes the truth of Christianity.

The whole system of doctrines which he taught, had their concentration in the declaration, that he should die a victim for the sin of the world; and that he should rise on the third day. This is the substance of all that the prophets had declared respecting him. His resurrection was therefore necessary, to identify him as the great Teacher and Redeemer of men. Had three days passed away, and the stone still been lying over the door of the sepulchre, and the body still been cold, lifeless, and motionless, the proof of his being an impostor, and even a blasphemer, would have been complete. Moreover, he had repeatedly declared, that he should rise on the third day. Had death retained its power over him, not all the array of argument, nor the power of persuasion, could have convinced mankind, nor even his disciples, that he was the Messiah. But the earthquake, which on the morning of the third day shook the ground, has also shaken the foundations of infidelity, and brought forth light and immortality. The angel who declared, "He is not here, he is risen," is a messenger sent to indicate to the sons of Adam, that the

day is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth to life. The resurrection of our Lord, is an illustration and a proof of the re-animation of all who are now in their graves. Thus the predictions of the ancient prophets, and of the Saviour, are found to have their accomplishment in his death and resurrection; and his gospel is proved to be the words of eternal life.

3. The resurrection of Christ is a victory over the power of death.

There is no enemy so dreadful to the human family as death. The first parents of the human family fell victims to his sway. Every intermediate generation, from Adam to those that now live on the earth, have gone down to the grave. Had there been no instance of resurrection, how gloomy must the future appear to all that live on the face of the earth! Though told by divine authority, that the dead shall rise, how difficult would it be to establish the truth in the minds of men! This may be seen in the condition of the Jews at the time of the Saviour. Though the resurrection from the dead had been openly taught in the prophetical writings, yet the large portion of the nation, who are denominated Sadducees, utterly rejected the doctrine of a future existence. So it would have been in our time, had not the resurrection of Christ invested this subject with evidence so clear that none can controvert it. Admit what we have this day proved, that Christ was raised from the dead, and every difficulty vanishes. The possibility of our resurrection is clearly demonstrated; and an interpretation is given to a large portion of the scripture on this subject, which might otherwise have been unintelligible. To the devout man, who looks forward to the arrival of the king of terrors, there is now nothing

fearful in his visage. And he can shout, "O! death, where is thy sting? O! grave, where is thy victory?"

4. If our resurrection be demonstrably established by the resurrection of Christ, it becomes us to be cautious how we use these bodies in the present life.

They will certainly bear the impression to all eternity, which is enstamped upon them here. Of those who sleep in the dust of the earth, some shall awake to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament. What specific marks will distinguish the righteous from the wicked, at the last day, it is impossible now to know. But we do know, that the wicked will not shine like the brightness of the firmament. We have reason to conclude, that their forms, of whatever they may be composed, will indicate their real characters. Yes; there is reason to suppose, that every unholy passion and lust, every sinful thought and transaction, are conspiring to mar all the beauty, to deface all the loveliness in form and feature; and, in proportion to our iniquities, to render us the shame and the abhorrence of all the inhabitants of eternity. With such prospects before us—and with the threat of those internal and everlasting horrors, which will invade the souls of the ungodly—shall we not all repent, that we may be justified, and escape those things which shall come on the wicked?

SERMON XX.

CHRIST MEETING HIS DISCIPLES.

JOHN xx. 24.—"But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came."

THE resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is a fact pre-eminently interesting to all who desire to arrive at certainty respecting a future existence. If any one hesitates in respect to receiving the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, or if he doubts respecting the possibility of a re-animation of those who have given up the ghost, it is easy not only to point him to predictions of a time, when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth to life; but also to show him, that one has actually risen from the dead, and dwelt forty days amongst the living, and openly ascended on high. There he will see a practical demonstration of the possibility of raising the dead, and from what he sees, will be able to put full confidence in the declarations of Jehovah respecting this interesting and wonderful event.

But on the ears of no others can the annunciation of the resurrection of our Lord fall with so thrilling a power, as on the immediate disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. They had forsaken friends and possessions at his call; they had abandoned all the ordinary means of life; and had devoted themselves unreservedly to him, as his friends, his disciples, the sharers of his deprivations, and the partakers of his sorrows, in the hope of enjoying the glory of his kingdom. Though frequently told that his government is spiritual in its

nature; though taught by his own sacred lips that his kingdom is not of this world; yet so strong were their original convictions of the external splendor and glory of his kingdom, that they did not relinquish the anticipation of earthly dominion and power. When, therefore, he was taken by wicked hands and slain, all their hopes were extinguished. As two of them were going to Emmaus, they spake of the Saviour. They told the story of his crucifixion. They said, "We trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel." All confidence in him, as the Messiah, seems now to have been lost. The fact, that he endured precisely what the scriptures had predicted respecting him, had destroyed all their faith in Christ, and made them to feel, that they were yet to look for another, as for him, whom the prophets had declared "should come." In these circumstances, the demonstration, that he had risen from the dead, was exceedingly cheering; and they said one to another, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and opened unto us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon."

I desire now distinctly to call your attention to some things in this meeting of the disciples.

I. It was a meeting of the most distinguished men of the church that ever assembled on the face of the earth. Here was Simon Peter, who, though in a moment of terror he had once denied the Lord, yet returned with renewed vigor to his service, and devoted his labors, and his very life, to the honor of his Lord. Here was Andrew his brother. Here was Matthew, the author of the gospel which bears his name; and James, who was moved by the Holy Ghost to write the

epistle, which warns men to see that their faith be not without works. Here were Philip, and Bartholomew, James the son of Zebedee, Lebbeus, and Simon the Canaanite. Here was John, the beloved disciple, to whom all the generations of Christians from the days of our Lord, are indebted for his history of the life, the doctrines, and the crucifixion of our Saviour. What an assemblage of noble men! It is not to be supposed that the haughty, the ambitious, the scorner, or the infidel, will set a high valuation on such society as this. But where is the Christian who would not be delighted to see them? What anxiety has been discovered in thousands of immortal beings, to possess some relic of them? How many have even gone to Judea, that they might behold the places in which they abode, might fix their eyes on the scenery in which they spent their days, might see the paths in which they travelled, and catch the spirit of those whom the Lord chose to be the instruments of spreading the knowledge of his salvation! Who is there now, who would not like to see those who thus accompanied our Lord, and "beheld his glory, even the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth?" Where is the Christian who would not delight to meet Matthew, and hear him tell all the circumstances of his acquaintance with our Lord, and relate all the particulars of his public life, his agonizing death, his triumphant resurrection, and his glorious ascension? Who would not cheerfully go even a long journey, to see the loving and beloved John; to hear him tell the discourses of our Lord Jesus Christ, and relate the words of life which he spake? Who would not like to meet the once unstable, but afterwards the firm, the penitent Peter, and hear him tell the emotions of his soul, when his Lord looked upon him; and he went out and wept bitterly? Who would not delight to listen to James,

the exposer of the errors, which now so much abound, of having faith without works? Whose heart does not leap for joy at the thought of meeting the immediate disciples of our Saviour in eternity, and of hearing from them the story of redeeming love? They whom all the devout would now delight to see, were once assembled together on the earth. Excepting the members of their own fraternity, they were alone. They were afraid of the Jews, who had just crucified the Lord. The doors were closed; but into this precious assemblage of disciples, one of their number came not. "Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them." He participated not in their sorrows. He strengthened not their fainting hearts. Whenever they were agitated, and felt that they needed all their companions, they could not but be pained that Thomas was not there. And why do you think he did not come?

II. This meeting was a most precious meeting. Not only were there in this assembly the disciples of our Lord, but he also knew of their meeting, and came to strengthen and to comfort them. There are some remarkable things in this meeting of his disciples. It does not appear that a particular house had been previously agreed upon as the place of meeting; nor is it supposable that the disciples, fearing the Jews, were assembled in a place easily found, or readily accessible. The place of their sorrows must have been a retired one. Every thing around them must have been hushed into silence. Nothing but an occasional sob could have interrupted the stillness of their meeting. The very doors, designed not merely in those regions to exclude the rain and the winds, but also the robbers, were made fast. The Saviour is not described as inquiring the way to his affrighted flock—there is no account that he asked any one where he might find his disciples. He does

not seem to have needed the guidance of any mortal to the place where they were assembled. Instead of asking where to turn to the right or the left, in order to find them, you might have seen him going directly to the place where they were, unobstructed by the darkness of the night, or the windings of the way. This is an affecting illustration of the passage—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Christ needs no conductor to the place where his people go to pray. Nor is he liable to mistake any assembly of business, or mirth, or pleasure, for that of prayer; nor is he retarded or hindered by these from meeting his people. On this, as on all other occasions, he went directly to the place of their assembly. O, what a blessing to be the servants of such a Master; of one who never forgets, never neglects, the appointments of his people! How different the Lord Jesus Christ is from us. Were he to forget the assemblies of his saints—were he to be inattentive to the cries of his people—what would become of their poor souls? Ought they not then to be as careful of his honor as he is of their eternal welfare? On this occasion, as on all others, when his people meet, Christ was present. The sacred historian declares—"Then the same day, at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and said unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord." They had rich and abundant cause for rejoicing. Their Lord, their Saviour, their all, had manifested himself to them. And who, of all the sons of men, would not rejoice to have a view of him who loved mankind, and died for them? We do not expect to see his material hands and

his pierced side. We do not desire any impression of such an image, however lively, upon our imagination. True saints desire that spiritual presence of the Saviour, that hidden communion of the heart, which none but they who are born again can ever experience. And when they thus behold the Saviour, their hearts are as glad as the disciples were, when the Lord rose from the dead and visibly and tangibly manifested himself to their material view. And yet, at this manifestation of Christ to his immediate disciples, one of their number was not present. "Thomas, one of the twelve, was not there."

III. Christ pronounced an important benediction on his disciples at this interview.

The benediction of a friend is delightful. That of a superior is cheering to the heart. The invocation of a parent for a child is exceedingly affecting, and even thrilling. But what are the invocations of friends, of superiors, and even of parents, compared with that of our Lord Jesus Christ! Him the Father always heareth. Let him say to the conflicting winds, and to the agitated billows, Peace, be still—and the storms cease to roar, and the waves to roll. Let him command the tempests of human passions, even when arrayed against an individual, to subside—and they are hushed into stillness. Let him command the arrows of persecution, and the missiles of death, to turn aside from their course—and the victim lives. If he invoke peace on the troubled and agitated bosom of a lost but penitent sinner, the gloom retires, the light of life shines in upon his soul, the sorrow is exchanged for joy. If death eternal stare us in the face, and seems ready to inflict his first blow upon us, and Jesus says, *Peace be unto you*, the terror is gone, and the soul walks forth in the freedom of the gospel, so important is the benediction of Christ. On the affecting occasion, when he first met his disciples,

the meaning of this benediction must have been extensive, as well as sweet to their souls. It implied that he had come, not as the scribes and pharisees, whom they feared, to take away their lives, but as a friend and a protector. It implied that he desired them to cherish peaceful dispositions towards one another. It implied that he would pray the Father that all the blessings of heavenly consolation may descend and rest upon their souls. And how precious, how cheering, was this intimation! The disciples knew that the Father always heareth the Son; they well understood the potency of his intercession. And when he invoked peace, they did not doubt but they should enjoy it. Contemplate now this little, timorous, feeble company of disciples. The day preceding, they had supposed themselves exposed to be regarded as impostors, to suffer shame, reproach, and contempt; to be harassed and subjected to suffering, till in gloom they went down to a violent death. Now Jesus, their instructor, their leader, their almighty friend, was alive. Now he was pronouncing on them a blessing, in comparison with which, all their other blessings are insignificant. No other moment of their lives could have been so delightful, so heavenly. And yet into this joyous assembly one of their number came not. "Thomas, one of the twelve, was not there." And why do you suppose it was that he did not come?

IV. Christ conferred on his disciples, in this assembly, a notable favor.

After he had pronounced his heavenly benediction upon them, he breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." This gracious act, which was not inferior to any other the Saviour had conferred on them, was indeed rich and glorious. From the fact, that the Holy Ghost was here conferred on the disciples, it is not to be inferred, that they had never before

enjoyed his heavenly influences. I know, indeed, that from this and corresponding passages, it has been inferred by some unthinking men, that his disciples were never converted till after the resurrection. But this doctrine is entirely inconsistent with all the representations of the New Testament. To his disciples our Lord said, "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" At another time, he said, "Now ye are clean, but not all." In these cases, he had evident reference to Judas Iscariot. And he most clearly implied, that in certain spiritual respects he differed from all the rest. But in what spiritual respect could he differ from them, except in regeneration? Nor is this the only instance, in which the descriptions of Christ show his disciples to have been born again previous to his crucifixion. Of them, he explicitly said, "They are not of the world." And he declares, "I have manifested thy name unto those that thou hast given me, out of the world. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word." But you may inquire, Do you believe, that any of the children of men, and especially these disciples, were converted without the Holy Ghost? I answer, No. Do you still inquire, What is meant, in this instance, by the expression, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost?" I again reply, 1. That a higher degree of divine influence was poured upon them at this time than in any former period. Whether this is to be regarded as relating to a miraculous influence, it is impossible for me to say. From the fact, that about fifty days from the time they were endued with miraculous power, by the descent of the Holy Ghost, on the day of pentecost—and also from the fact, that during these fifty days, they wrought no miracles—I am disposed to infer, that it was not of a miraculous nature. What, then, is meant by their

receiving the Holy Ghost? I reply, that in this period, they had need of the special work of God on their understandings and their hearts, to cause them to receive the instruction which their peculiar circumstances required. Their views respecting the nature of Christ's kingdom were now to undergo an entire change. Their ideas of his government were now to be purified of their earthliness. Their hearts were now to be prepared to relish, to admire, and cordially to receive the great doctrine, that he died a sin-offering for the children of men. The dispensation, under which they had lived, was now to wax old, and decay; and a purer, a higher, a nobler, and a more spiritual one was about to be introduced. Within fifty days they were to be fully prepared to enter on the work, for which our Lord had for three years been training and maturing them. In this preparation, they needed peculiar help from on high. They needed to have their understandings quickened, their hearts warmed, and their courage increased, for their work. Soon, instead of having their Lord to direct all their steps, they were to go forth, unaccompanied by him, to the work of confronting a world that lieth in wickedness. Such was their condition. They had then a peculiar necessity for the assistance of the Holy Spirit. In supplying this necessity, the Saviour breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." But when this immense favor was conferred on them, and they were prepared to receive and profit by the instructions of the Saviour, Thomas was not there. And why, *why did he not come?*

I know it will be immediately said, that he had not faith in the Saviour, as risen from the dead. But this is not a satisfactory answer. They who assembled together had not faith in this respect; for if they had, why was it necessary for Christ to show them his hands

and his side? What else but doubt, respecting his resurrection, is indicated by such a transaction as this? It is evident, that by being in the assembly of the disciples, in the place where he met them, they enjoyed the means of banishing their faithlessness, and of arriving at a settled conviction that their Lord had risen. That Thomas was more inclined to unbelief than his brethren, I do not doubt; but that this was the reason why he did not come to the assembly, is hardly admissible. That this was not the reason is plain, from the fact, that it was not faith which brought him thither the second time, when Christ appeared. He had no confidence in the resurrection of Christ, till he was commanded, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas said, My Lord and my God." It was not, then, his faith in the Messiah that brought him to the meeting of the disciples, but his being at the meeting, that gave him an opportunity of seeing his Lord, of knowing that he had risen, and of fixing his confidence in him.

This fact, concerning the faith of the disciples, and especially of Thomas, is worthy of the consideration of every Christian. It is not here to be doubted, but Thomas was a child of God. But by being absent from the meeting of the disciples, when the Saviour came first amongst them, he lost the opportunity of having his mind enlightened concerning the prophecies of the Old Testament, as accomplished in the resurrection of the Saviour. He lost, for a time, the consolation of knowing that Jesus was not an impostor, and that his faith in him was not in vain. And had he not soon returned to their meeting, there is reason to believe, his doubts respecting the resurrection of the Saviour would have continued. Whatever his feelings were, during the

seven intermediate days, we are not informed. We know only, that his mind continued to doubt, till he went into the assembly of the saints, and met the Saviour. There they were removed. There his heart broke forth, in joyful admiration, "*My Lord and my God!*" There he became united in spirit with the rest of the disciples, and prepared to await the glorious developments, which were about to be made, respecting the Messiah and his kingdom. Thus it may be with those who are not found mingling in the prayers and praises of God's people, in these later times. It may be, that by being with them in their devotions, they will find their love kindle, and their faith strengthen, and their hearts so filled with grace as to be able to recognise Christ, and to say to him, "My Lord and my God."

The subject is interesting in another respect. It shows what those Christians must be, who would allure others into the assemblies of the saints and unto Christ. The disciples did not go to Thomas, and address him as a cold, faithless apostate. They never felt themselves to have the authority which some now claim, who may themselves be in a condition as cold, as faithless, and as near to spiritual apostacy, as those whom they address. Let their course, in this respect, be pondered and most diligently weighed, by all who desire the promotion of Christ's cause. How did they address the unbelieving Thomas? With kindness, they approached him. With tenderness, they told him, "We have seen the Lord." And this led the doubting man himself to go and see, if he could see him. And if ye would awaken a sleeping brother in the church to spiritual life, you must have spiritual life in yourself. You must be able to say to him, Not I am of Paul, and he will bring you to life; I am of Cephas, and he will bring you to life; but

I have seen the Lord. And this must be said, not merely by words, but by a sweet and heavenly demeanor, utterly remote from anything that can imply evil in your neighbor, or vanity in yourself. In this way, you will bless the church and glorify God; while in every other way, you will mar the beauty of God's heritage, and dishonor the name of the Redeemer.

This subject shows all Christians what they must do to be useful.

They must see the Lord. I do not mean, that they must see him with their material eyes, as the disciples saw him. I do not mean, that they must form in their minds, images of him, and substitute these for the Saviour. I mean, that they should have that spiritual operation on their hearts, which enables them, by faith, to receive Christ in his glory and his loveliness, and to be conformed to his spiritual image. Thus they will be prepared to diffuse on all around them the sweet and heavenly odor of religion. There will be an attractiveness in their demeanor, which will allure men to the service of Jesus. Nothing short of this spirit of Christ will be of any avail in this matter. Without it, all things else, of whatever sort they may be, are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. And hence, the man who attempts to reclaim those around him, needs, first of all, to pray, The Lord Jesus Christ be with my spirit. Nor will it answer for him merely to affirm, that he has the spirit of Christ. In all his intercourse with his brethren, he must bear the fruits of the Spirit. And here he must remember, that he is not at liberty to impute to the Spirit whatever thoughts, or words, or deeds, he may have, even though he may be disposed to think them to be the results of the Spirit. God has defined what the fruits of the Spirit are. Angels know them. Devils understand them.

Even the impenitent, who have attended with diligence to the word of God, are able to form a tolerably correct opinion, whether we are bearing the fruits of the Spirit. They have read, that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. And they expect to see these things in the real Christian. And it is of no use for individuals to say, "We have seen the Lord," who do not possess them. Nor can members of the church be useful, who do not possess them. The grand requisite in those who desire to reclaim others, is to possess, and to enjoy, and to exhibit the Spirit of Christ. Let this spirit reign in each of you, and the cause of God will rapidly advance, and souls will be seen flocking to Christ as clouds, and as doves to their windows.

SERMON XXI.

THE EXTENT OF CHRIST'S GOVERNMENT.

2 CORINTHIANS x. 5.—"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

THE apostle had here been speaking of some who regarded him and the other saints as walking after the flesh; and he had denied the truth of their statements respecting this matter. "For though," he says, "for though we walk in the flesh," though we are human beings, "yet we do not war after the flesh; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds." The weapons with which we make war on our own propensities, are not carnal; they are not weak and ineffective, but mighty. Nor does the apostle here overlook the fact, that these weapons alone are inefficient. He never adopted the doctrine, that means and motives alone are sufficient. These, with all their excellency and adaptation to their end, are of themselves utterly inefficient. They must be accompanied with the power of the Most High. And hence, the apostle says, the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God. He distinctly recognises the existence of weapons in this warfare, but attributes their effectiveness altogether to the power of God.

But what are these weapons, thus accompanied by divine power, competent to do? What can they avail in the work of subjugating human propensities, and bringing the whole man to bow to Christ? To this I

reply, they are mighty to the pulling down of strong holds. These strong holds are within the man on whom the weapons of God are brought to bear. They are in the heart. They are his evil propensities, his corrupt tendencies, and all the lusts which war against the high interests of man. They reign over all the impenitent, yet with different degrees of power. The remains of them are found in every renewed heart. This dominion it is the design of the gospel to overthrow, and, through God, it is mighty to overcome them,—to cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

We have been recently attending to the mediatorial work of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have meditated on him in his humiliation and in his exaltation. We have contemplated him as the Redeemer of our souls, as the Intercessor before God in our behalf, and as the "King, on whose vesture and on whose thigh there is a name written—King of kings, and Lord of lords." We come to-day to meditate on the extent of his government. This is either *internal* and *external*, or *external* alone. The external alone relates merely to the wicked, and comprehends the restraining influence of Christ over them in this world, and the infliction on them in the world to come of all the punishment threatened in the word of God. This punishment seems to be indicated in such passages as—"He shall reign till he hath put all things under his feet." "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." This portion of the general subject will be deferred till some future Sabbath. It is our purpose to-day to contemplate the government of Christ in those respects in which both the internal and external

dominion over his subjects is acquired and maintained. You will all see that I here refer to the government of Christ over the hearts and lives of his people. To the extent of this government, I desire distinctly to call your attention; and I entreat you diligently to consider it, and to apply it to your own hearts and lives, that you may be able to determine the question, Whether ye be the servants of Christ?

The dominion of Christ in his disciples, casts down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

There are, then, in the souls of men, imaginations which are averse to God. There are high things which are against the knowledge of God. These are thoughts which need to be brought into captivity to Christ. Over all these his dominion extends. His spiritual government begins in the souls of his people.

And here it has to counteract our original depravity. Early in the history of the world, we are told that the interior of man was corrupt. In Genesis vi. 5, we are taught that "The wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." And from this internal defection results all our transgressions. Hence, in the fifty-third Psalm, we are told, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. Corrupt are they; they have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good. God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back; they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Isaiah declares, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him turn unto the Lord, and he

will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

The nature of these imaginations are not very distinctly defined. They are the result of the internal depravity which infects our whole inner man. Amongst these may be mentioned, that those who do not receive the revelation which God has given to men, follow the imaginations of their own hearts, in respect to the existence and mode of worshipping the Supreme Being. Hence it has occurred that men are found who worship gods of wood, and stone, and earth, which can neither see, nor hear, nor save. Hence it has happened, that their code of morals has not only tolerated, but in some instances actually enjoined, the most execrable immoralities in their intercourse with one another. This has always been the result of not receiving the authority of the Almighty. The mind of man, when left to its own course, under the direction of the human heart, has sought out many inventions, all of which are dishonorable to Jehovah, and mischievous to itself.

Nor are these things found only where the word of God is not professedly received. Even in those individuals who tolerate it in their houses, who read it in their families, who were taught it in their childhood, there are thousands of ways in which its force is broken, and its precepts nullified. There are subtleties, subterfuges, excuses, and evasions, which have their origin in our depravity, and which fortify and strengthen the soul in its rebellion. There are views of what a human being ought to be, and of what he ought to do, which are thoroughly in opposition to the laws of the Almighty. Instead of exalting the Lord our Redeemer, we are disposed to exalt ourselves. Instead of receiving the revealed will of the Lord as the rule of our lives, we are ready to set our own reasonings, and the dictates of

our passions before us as our rule of duty. Indeed, it is our constant desire to exalt our own views and feelings to the imperial station, and to require all other things to retire before them. Now, the whole of this internal condition needs to be changed. The entire inner man needs to be subdued to the dominion of Christ. And this is eventually effected in those who are born of God. Under the reign of him who is at the Father's right hand, there is an entire conquest of the soul.

This is effected, I. By preparing their hearts to receive new rules of duty.

The leading principle, which governs mankind previously to their regeneration, is pleasure. And hence, it is said of them, they are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Whatever seems to promise them delight, is most readily adopted and cheerfully followed; and so long as their hearts remain alienated from God, will they follow the native propensities of their own corrupt bosoms. But when Jesus has determined to take possession of the soul; when he undertakes to bring an individual to yield to his authority; he makes him cordially willing. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Jehovah himself asserts, "I will put a new spirit within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh; that they may walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments to do them." "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God." The law of the Lord had been always before them as it has been before us, but it was not received as the rule of life. The motives of the law and of the gospel are always before the impenitent; but they are not adopted, nor suffered to have their due weight on them. Hence, it is necessary that the Lord should

put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them an heart of flesh, that they may adopt and obey the rule of life which he has given them. In doing this, he causes their sins to pass in order before their eyes. He makes them behold the misery to which they are exposed; and often gives them a foretaste of those horrors of conscience which they must hereafter feel. He makes them to understand the evil of their sins; and to appreciate, in some faint degree, the horrors which they must forever endure. Thus he causes them to feel their need of aid from above, and to apply for renovation, for forgiveness, and for salvation, to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. Thus they are forgiven through his blood, and renewed by his Spirit. Now, instead of being delighted with obeying the evil propensities of their own souls, they delight in the law of the Lord. Instead of turning away from it, it has attractions which are powerful and glorious. Instead of loving the world, and esteeming it their chief good, they love the Lord their God and Redeemer. Thus their hearts, instead of following their own evil propensities, are prepared to abandon them as the rule of life, and to receive a law which they had always rejected; to obey a law which they had always disobeyed; and to honor a Saviour whom they had always dishonored. He causes their inward man to be conformed to the law, which is contained in the statute book of the universe; and thus he prepares it to walk in all his commandments.

II. Another mode in which Christ effects this total renovation in men, is by controlling their opinions on all the subjects which pertain to his kingdom. It cannot be admitted, that he changes the opinions of men by any miraculous process. This work is effected by producing in them an earnest desire to know the truth,

and to understand their duty. This desire becomes so strong, as to weaken and undermine the prejudices which they may have had against some, or all the doctrines of grace. It prostrates the pride of intellect, which is wont to set up its own philosophy as a standard by which divine truth is to be tried. It awakens an interest in the truth, and produces long and earnest attention to the things which are unfolded in the oracles of God. The maxims of divine truth soon supersede those which had been formed under the control of the evil propensities, and the unbaptized passions of the carnal man. The new heart and the new spirit do not relish the opinions, the maxims, and the thoughts, which were cherished in the days of impenitence. The soul, which has been born of God, thirsts for the high and holy truths which come down from God. These, however humbling they may be, are readily received and adopted. Thus, by being constantly in the school of Christ, and by possessing the meekness and the teachableness of a genuine disciple, the opinions, the modes of thinking, and the thoughts themselves become such as pertain to the family of Christ, and accord with his word. It is not to be supposed, that, in this life, Christians will be perfect in knowledge. There are in them the remains of their evil propensities, which resist the truth, in precisely the same degree as they prevail. There is also the continual influx of the errors of the wicked, which it requires the utmost watchfulness to expel. And there is a continued remembrance of what they once thought and believed. These are all liable to recur, and, (while they are not aware,) to obtain the temporary control over them. Sudden passion also is apt to awaken in their minds those views which they once held, and to compel them for a time to adopt them, and act according to them. But the whole tendency of

the renovation, which is begun within them, and of the truths which are poured in from the word of God without them, is to bring them gradually to a conformation, in mind and heart, to the image of their Maker. It is to cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Though, in this life, the Christian never arrives at perfection, yet there is a gradual advancement towards it, not merely in the temper of his heart, but in the agreement of his thoughts with the written revelation of God. And he who does not find a growing conformity in his views to the word of God, in all its leading principles, may be assured that he is not advancing in preparation for the heavenly world. The effect of the dominion of Christ over the soul, is to bring the thoughts as well as the feelings into agreement with the divine oracles; and he who finds his understanding recoil from any of the truths of the scriptures, has reason to suspect that the power of Godliness does not dwell in his bosom.

III. In his high station, as King over the souls of his people, he keeps them back from transgression, and restrains them from iniquity.

The saints have, at all times, felt their liability to wander from God, and to sin against him. David prayed, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me." "From secret faults, cleanse thou me." "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any evil way in me; and lead me in the way everlasting. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." Nor was this the result of a groundless suspicion of himself. The psalmist

Asaph confessed, and declared, "My feet were almost gone. My steps had well nigh slipped." In accordance with the feelings of David and Asaph, are those of the apostle,—"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed, lest he fall." "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." The protection of his people is effected in various ways. He sometimes removes the object which is likely to prove the occasion of sinning against him. Thus parents are removed from children, who are exposed by them to be drawn away from the service of Jehovah. Thus children are removed from parents, who set their affections on them rather than on God. Thus earthly possessions are taken away, when they are likely to obstruct our intercourse with God. Friends, to whom we become too ardently attached, are removed; and thus we are taught the instability of earthly joys, and the necessity of fixing our affections solely on Jehovah. Nor is this influence altogether indirect. Who will venture to deny that he who made the heart, can approach unto it, and graciously turn it away from forbidden objects, and fix the affections solely on himself? Does he not declare, "I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me?" Are we not told, respecting his people, that they are "Kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation?"

IV. As a King he gives a merciful encouragement to his subjects to obey him.

He has established in his dispensations an immutable connexion between obedience and delight. And he uniformly so administers his spiritual favors, as to invite and encourage men to serve him. He has revealed to

them, that "The work of righteousness is peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever." He has told them, that "The ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." And he has taught them, that he that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is a *rewarder* of them that diligently seek him. Nor is he wont to hold forth encouragements alone. No; he appeals to his people, and demands, "Have I been a barren wilderness, or a land of darkness to you?" Have I not caused delights to spring up on every side of you, and light from the sun of righteousness to shine upon you? Have not all my dispensations with you been marked by kindness and love? Have I not poured upon you the richest of all my favors; and given you a cheering foretaste of immortal glory? Have I not been in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life? Have not the poor in spirit always been blessed? Have not they that mourned been comforted? Have not the meek inherited their blessing? Have not they that hungered and thirsted after righteousness been filled? Have not the merciful obtained mercy? Have not the pure in heart had wonderful manifestations of God? Has it ever been alleged, that Jehovah has failed to accomplish his promises to the children of men? In this manner, the Saviour induces his people to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, to abandon the dictates of their own minds, to relinquish their imaginations, and every thing that exalteth itself against God, and to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And who, that has ever become a child of God, has not found all his promises to be fulfilled; and all his proffered joys to be a cheering reality? And what an encouragement is this to forsake every evil way, and every unholy project, and to give up ourselves to the

dominion of Christ! How merciful is the Prince of Peace, thus to allure us by foretastes of his heavenly glory, to submit to his government here, that we may be prepared for the abodes of righteousness forever!

V. He chastises his wandering children; and thus reclaims them from following their own devices and imaginations.

Instances of this sort are numerous in the scriptures. When Moses spake unadvisedly with his lips, the Lord denied him what he desired above every thing else on the earth. He denied him the privilege of entering into the land of Canaan. When David had sinned against him, he stretched forth his chastising rod, and smote the child of his iniquity and his shame. An ambitious son dethroned the guilty father; and as he turned mourning away from his throne, and his dwelling, and his family, a man of Bahurim came forth and cursed him. When Paul had been favored with visions of the heavenly world, and had heard things which could not be uttered, and had become exposed to be "lifted up above measure," then he was subjected to the thorn in the flesh; and to the minister of Satan, who buffeted him. Indeed, this is a principle in the divine government. So thoroughly is it interwoven with all the principles of the divine administration in preparing sons and daughters for the kingdom of heaven, that Paul told the Christians of his own time, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastisement, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he, whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all (that is, all Christians) are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather

be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?" In this manner he subdues their wayward tendencies, conquers their remaining rebellion, brings all their thoughts into sweet acquiescence with his will, and prepares them for a scene of eternal delight.

VI. When they repent of their iniquities, and turn unto him, he gives them gracious tokens of his favor.

There is nothing else, which so breaks the heart, and subdues the spirit, and agitates the soul, as those chastisements which God adapts and sends upon his people, for the purpose of withdrawing them from iniquity, of casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. The waves of the soul are driven into commotion. Tempests, like the overwhelmings of the mighty deep, roll over it. Thunders, unheard indeed by mortal ears, but more terrific than those of Sinai, are there. Lightnings, invisible indeed to the eyes, mingle in the scene. Like those of the mountain of the wilderness, they cause the very bones to tremble. In this chastisement no light breaks in on the soul. It is darkness—darkness, like the shadow of death! The Lord hides his face. Every thing seems to threaten an immediate and an eternal overthrow. But when the soul is once subdued; when it casts away its imaginations, and whatever has exalted itself against the Almighty; then it listens to the words of the Saviour. It stops and says, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, and to his saints." And he draws from it the practical warning, which the scriptures suggest, "*Let them not turn again to folly.*" Now the peace of God rules in their hearts. The thunders cease to roar. The lightnings no longer blaze. The tempests no longer lower. The sun of righteousness shines. A cheering serenity overspreads the soul. And now it gives itself

over to the control of the Saviour. It charges its thoughts, and feelings, to wander no more. It is delighted at the thought of being once more reconciled to God, and of enjoying the light of his countenance. Such are the tokens of favor, which Christ confers on those whom his chastisements have reclaimed.

Now, brethren, I wish to inquire whether ye have thus been subdued to Christ, and brought into cordial obedience to his will. The precise point which I desire you to settle is, whether ye have indeed become members of the spiritual kingdom of Christ. This you can decide only by ascertaining whether your lives are brought into obedience to the requisitions of the Redeemer.

1. Are your hearts right with God? Are your feelings in coincidence with his claims upon you? Has your love for the world abated? Do you seek its possessions, its gratifications, and its honors, less eagerly than heretofore? Has it lost its attractions, and fascinations? And is the place which it once occupied, now filled with desires for Jehovah, and for beholding his glory? Are your souls so anxious to see the excellence and to perceive the glory of Christ, as to be frequently and delightfully engaged in dwelling on him?

2. How are your minds employed? What is the direction of your thoughts? Are they as intent as ever on the world? Do you think as much and as eagerly on the things of this vain life, as before you were introduced into the visible family of Christ? We are informed on the authority of God, that "*as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.*" The meaning is not that a man is what he thinks himself to be, but that a man is as his thoughts are. If, then, an individual wishes to know his own character, and the objects which most interest him, let him ascertain the subjects on which

he thinks most, and most agreeably. This will show him what he is, and will unfold to him the secrets of his own character. In view of this truth, permit me to ask you where are your thoughts? Are they chiefly on God, on Christ, and the work of grace? Then you are probably a child of God. Your imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against God, are cast down, and your thoughts are brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

Are your thoughts chiefly and delightfully employed about some single sin? Then in this respect you are probably a great sinner. Are they employed chiefly and delightfully about the world? Then you are a lover of the world rather than a lover of God. Your imaginations have not been cast down, nor your thoughts brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

3. The life also is generally an exact index of the state of the soul. I do not mean, that a single transgression proves an individual to be either an impenitent man, or a hypocrite. Nor do I mean that a single act, or a week, or month, or year of devotion, proves him to be a Christian. But I do mean, that the general course of life, infallibly shows the state of the inner man. What then does your course indicate? What does the place of secret prayer say respecting you? What does the manner of your reading the scriptures testify? What witness do your prayers in the family bear, (*if indeed you pray there at all!*) What is indicated by your attendance on public worship? What is the testimony of the prayer-meeting? Where are you when your brethren meet to pray? And is it indeed true, that your conduct in these respects is a tolerably correct index of your character? What, then, in your own judgment is your character? What is it in the sight

of your neighbors, of your wives, of your husbands, of your children, and of God? Come, brethren, meditate on these things. Look at them as they must be viewed at the great day. Consider where you are, and where your souls must soon be! The things to which you listen are not dreams. If they were, you could safely continue to be careless. They will prove to some, realities of delight; to others, of sorrow.

Situated as ye are, I should do injustice to my own feelings, to my Lord, and to you, if I should fail to call on you solemnly to examine yourselves. What, according to all these tests, is the state of your souls? Where are you going? What will your end be? Will you not *now* arise and search your hearts, and see whether all your imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against God, are cast down, and your very thoughts brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ?

SERMON XXII.

THE EXTENT OF CHRIST'S GOVERNMENT.

PHILIPPIANS ii. 9. 10. 11.—"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

You will remember that on the last Sabbath I presented to your view the dominion of our Lord Jesus Christ over his subjects. I then said, that this dominion over them is either internal and external, or external alone. Those over whom this dominion is internal as well as external, are, indeed, the children of God. The effect of the government of Christ over them, is to cast down imaginations, and every hight hing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. This portion of the subject we have already illustrated, and endeavored to apply. There is, however, another attitude in which his dominion ought to be deliberately viewed and solemnly considered. There are individuals who do not obey our Lord Jesus Christ, and whose hearts will never submit to his control. But notwithstanding this internal resistance of his government, he will acquire, and forever maintain, an external dominion over them; so that it will be true, that "At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

While, then, some of the children of men cordially

submit to Christ, and acknowledge him to be their Lord and King, he will extend his dominion over all created intelligences, and thoroughly subjugate all beings to his dominion, however unwilling they are now, or may continue to be in all eternity. Even against all their wishes, and desires, and efforts, Christ will rule over them, so that they shall be compelled to acknowledge him as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

I. Even against their desires, Christ will rule over the ungodly.

II. They will be compelled to acknowledge him to be Lord.

III. This shall not result in their own salvation, but in the glory of God the Father.

I. Even against their desires, Christ will rule over the ungodly.

1. This will be found to be true respecting his providential dispensations.

That Christ is the providential Ruler of this world, cannot be disputed by one who admits the divine authority of the New Testament. Christ is there represented as the Creator of all things. "By him," it affirms, "were all things made, and without him was not any thing made that was made." He is there declared to be "God over all, blessed forevermore." He is said to "Uphold all things by the word of his power." He is represented as seated on the throne of Jehovah. He is often declared to be sitting at the right hand of the Father. These, and similar declarations, show that he is above all principalities and powers. Nor are these declarations unsupported by facts. When he dwelt among men, he gave proofs of his control over the elements. At his command the tempests ceased to rage. The agitated sea was hushed into silence. The restless winds heard his voice and were still. Nor is his provi-

dential control less effective in respect to the affairs of men. We are taught that "A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps." Though man will not cordially execute the designs of the Lord, but chooses his own ways, yet there is an unseen Being who, after all his calculations, exercises the control over him, and causes him to arrive at results which he never anticipated. And hence, in the seventy-fifth Psalm, God instructs the impenitent, and cautions them, saying, "Lift not up the horn; lift not up your horn on high. Speak not with a stiff neck, for promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: He putteth down one and setteth up another." The providential government of Jesus will be sustained, and his dominion will extend over the ungodly, and they will be, in certain respects, subject to it; though they "*mean not so, neither doth their heart think so.*" Though they do not glorify God with *their bodies and their spirits, which are his;* though, regardless of their Maker, they advance in the ways which their own hearts shall direct; yet he will so overrule their goings, as to accomplish the great objects of his kingdom, and acquire the renown of wisely administering the affairs of his government.

2. He restrains them from many sins which they are disposed to commit.

These restraints are very numerous. In many individuals they consist in an inwrought reverence for Jehovah. Though their hearts have never submitted to his government, nor acknowledged his control, yet there is deeply implanted in many bosoms a dread of the unseen Being by whom we are surrounded. There is an apprehension in many souls, that those eyes which run to and fro through all the earth, will see; and those ears, which

are always open, will hear; and the heart, which always abhors transgression, will be indignant; and the hand, which holds the scourge, will inflict chastisement. This apprehension of the rod of the Almighty has so alarmed many of the ungodly, as to keep them back from various transgressions which they otherwise would have readily committed.

3. The law of the Lord is also a serious restraint to the ungodly. In the light of this holy instrument, they are made to see something more than they would discover by their own reason, of the distinction between right and wrong. Their moral judgment is thus brought to condemn their own course of thought, of feeling, and of life. Through the combined operation of the divine law, and their own consciences, there are serious obstructions cast in the way of their own continuance in sin. The guilt of their actions often, like a monster, stares them in the face, and causes them to start back with horror. The fear of disclosure, either in this life, or at the great day, makes them tremble to enter on any bold transgression. Though their evil propensities be not checked, and their hearts be not subdued to the dominion of Christ, nor their thoughts brought into captivity to him, yet they are restrained.

4. The chastisements which attend a course of transgression in this life, are also a serious check to those who do not cordially obey God. These every ungodly man has seen. These he continually fears. Nor are his fears groundless. What man going forward in his career does not endure them? From the beggar in the streets, to the monarch on his throne, who does not experience them? And what would this world be were it not for the restraining chastisements of Jehovah? We cannot look with calmness on the hand which inflicts a severe stroke on ourselves; which breaks up our plans,

and overthrows our enterprizes. Even though we may know that these projects do not promote the general good of mankind, but tend to their unhappiness and their injury, yet we are slow to relinquish them; and we look upon the act of heaven, which thwarts them, as an unkind interference. Such is man by nature, in respect to the visitations of the Almighty to himself. But when these visitations are inflicted on others, he can see their righteousness, and approve their object. When the late emperor of France had waded in human blood, over nearly all Europe; when sighs, and tears, and pains, and miseries, were sent by millions in a single day, to almost every part of the continent; and when this had been repeated year after year, the hand of the Lord was stretched out against him, he was arrested in his course, and sent to dwell in an island of the sea. However little those who sent him thither may have supposed that they were instruments in the infliction of a divine chastisement upon him; and however hard his condition may have seemed to himself, and to thousands who sympathized with him; yet who can contemplate this act of the Almighty, without admiring *His* care for the unnumbered hosts who had suffered, or were likely to suffer the effects of his ambition? Who can now call these things to mind, without inquiring, is this the man who said in his heart, "I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation." Is this the man "that made the earth to tremble; that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of the prisoners? And now the whole earth is at rest, and is quiet," and breaks forth in singing. When we see a river of blood stopped, and the highway of death obstructed by arresting a single individual,

who does not admire the goodness of God? And who is not ready to say, "Just and true, righteous and holy are all thy ways, O thou king of saints." But, notwithstanding the righteousness of the divine dispensations, as seen by every disinterested witness, yet the subject of these chastisements is not apt to see their justice, nor to acknowledge their excellence. In sullen rebellion, he admits, that the hand of the Lord has touched him; and though murmuring at the deed, is compelled to recognise the fact that the Lord reigns.

II. They will be compelled to acknowledge him to be Lord.

1. The punishments which the wicked know that they must endure, often constrain them, contrary to their inclinations, to acknowledge him as the Lord.

This is illustrated by the circumstances in which the evil spirits met the Saviour. You all remember their cry, "We know thee who thou art, Jesus the Son of God. Art thou come to torment us before the time?" Who can read this address of these abandoned spirits, without having his very soul agitated in view of the future condition of the ungodly, and without understanding how every knee shall be made to bow, and every tongue to confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father? Nor is this true merely of evil spirits. Let the deist draw near to his grave. Let the clouds of death begin to gather over him, and his deism departs. Or let the chariot of the Almighty be heard as it rolls through the sky, and the lightnings of his power burst forth on every side, *and knees will bow which never bent before,* and tongues will acknowledge Christ to be Lord, which never ceased, at other times, to pronounce him to be an impostor.

Now if, 2. Such be the effect of these limited terrors; if these apprehensions, which are but for a moment,

are capable of causing such knees to bow, and such tongues to confess that Jesus is Lord; what must be the effect of the scenes of the great day, when all the kindreds of the earth shall wail, as they see the Son of Man come with power and great glory? What must be the effect of an entrance into that world, whose very existence is not now believed by many, and when believed for a moment, is capable of calling forth expressions of such terror? What must be the effect of entering that pit ordained of old, prepared for Satan and his angels; whose pile is fire and much wood, and whose flame the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, shall kindle? They, who under the influence of terror here, are compelled to admit that Christ reigns, will surely acknowledge it there. They will then know, that contrary to their desires, Christ has ruled over them, and is still the Ruler of the universe. This fact they will be compelled continually to acknowledge.

In this world, men are exceedingly apt to attribute whatever befalls them to some intermediate cause or agent. Not only do they dishonor God, by neglecting to acknowledge him as the author of all their blessings, but they provoke him, by refusing to recognise his hand in the chastisements which they suffer. These they refer to something else than to the Most High. But though many, *in this life*, will not acknowledge Christ to be the supreme Ruler of the universe, they will be compelled to acknowledge it hereafter. Though their own evil propensities, or their prejudices, may here prevent them from admitting the truth, it will there break in on their minds, so clearly, that they cannot deny it. No end can be gained by denying it. It will stand forth like the sun in the heavens. And though its rays will be painful and scorching, yet it will not there be

of any avail to deny it. Here, men may quiet their consciences, and obtain a temporary rest, by excluding it from their minds and their hearts. There, no exclusion of the truth will remove the agonies which they may feel. There, no exclusion of the truth will be possible. *It must forever be seen—and forever be painful.* There, every miserable soul shall confess Christ to be Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

III. This shall not result in their own salvation, but in the glory of God the Father.

There is a period in which the confession of Christ has a bearing upon our salvation. This period is in the present life. There is no reason to believe, that the doors of the world of wo will ever be opened for the discharge of the prisoners of despair, however much they may confess Christ to be Lord. It is in this world only, that "*confession is made unto salvation.*" Here only is eternal life offered. Here only are men called upon to confess Christ, with reference to salvation. Here only it is, that we are told, "Whosoever shall confess me, him also will I confess, before my Father who is in heaven." In reference to a neglect thus cordially to confess Christ in this world, it is said, "*Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in the glory of his Father.*" However full an acknowledgment shall be made, concerning the character or dignity of Christ, when he shall come in the glory of his Father, it cannot affect the salvation of him who makes it. Christ has told us, that of those who do not confess him here, he shall be ashamed in eternity.

There is another particular, which enters deeply into this confession of Christ. It must be a cordial one. It must proceed from the affections of the soul. It must be the dictate of the whole inner man. If it be not,

what can it avail? In what respect will it transcend the burst of terror, which was uttered by the evil spirits, who inquired, "*Art thou come to torment us before the time?*" In what respect will it differ from the constant, the reigning feelings of devils? For we are told they believe and tremble. It will be possible forever to admit, for it cannot be denied, that Christ is Lord; that on his vesture and on his thigh, a *name is written—King of kings, and Lord of lords*; while not one feeling of love shall exist in the soul, not one act of repentance shall be performed, nor one cordial exercise of submission to his government and law shall be found in the bosom. Now, this is the probable condition of the finally impenitent. Though the government of Jehovah is extended over them; though they are compelled to acknowledge the supremacy of Christ; they have no relish for his laws, no regard for his honor, and no desire to promote the glory of Jehovah. In these respects, it differs from that confession of Christ which is unto salvation.

And yet the glory of God will be promoted by it; though they mean not so, neither doth their heart think so. I do not here pretend to draw a parallel between the amount of glory which the confession of a soul that is saved, on the one hand, and of one that is lost, on the other, will bring to Jehovah.

But who does not see, that this admission, by the finally impenitent and lost sinner, will bring a revenue of glory to the Deity? In this world, the ungodly are unwilling to recognise Christ as their Ruler, or to walk in his statutes. The whole testimony of their lives is, "We will not have this man to reign over us." What an unhappy influence is this testimony designed to have, respecting the government of Christ! What an unhappy bearing has it upon his right to reign, or on

his character as a Ruler! What a virtual impeachment is it of Jehovah! What a mighty tendency has it to undermine and destroy his government, over the minds and hearts of men! What an encouragement is it to devils, to hold on in their career of injurious and unjust rebellion against Jehovah! What reproach is it calculated to bring upon the whole government of the Most High!

Now, when these same beings, who, in this world, have refused to acknowledge Christ as Lord; who have resented the idea, that such an one as he, who once dwelt in the flesh, should be elevated to the dominion of the universe; when these beings come fully to admit, that he is Lord; when they come to understand, that it is utterly impossible to resist or to escape his control; when, in settled and weighty, though sullen despair, they confess what they had always rejected, that "*Jesus is Lord;*" when they confess, that he has overcome them in the great controversy of righteousness, and that though they always refused to be his cordial subjects, they could not, either in time or in eternity, escape beyond the boundaries of his empire; that after resisting and rejecting him, and persuading themselves, and laboring to persuade others, that his government is neither important to the good of the universe, nor essential to their own happiness; they had at length found themselves to be mistaken, and Jehovah alone to be true and righteous, and all he had told them to be accordant with facts, and designed for their best, their eternal good; when, after a life of rebellion and a death of impenitence, they admit all this; will it not bring honor to the Holy One? Will they not thus indirectly and unwillingly be made to promote that glory, which they had here labored to tarnish and to counteract?

1. The fact, that every tongue shall eventually

acknowledge Christ to be Lord, is a special encouragement to the saints in this world.

Christians, in this life, have always been but a small portion of the inhabitants of the world. Around them, on every side, the great body have been without any practical regard for the Saviour. At a distance from them, darkness, unbroken darkness and rebellion have reigned. A vast portion of the children of men have been unwilling to acknowledge Christ as Lord. But this condition of things is not always to continue. The period is not distant, when a vastly greater portion of the earth shall cordially know the Saviour, and honor him as Lord and King. Even those who refuse him this honor here; who scorn to serve the Prince of Peace; will hereafter reluctantly confess him to be Lord, to the glory of God the Father. The time is not remote, when every tongue in the universe shall pay willing or unwilling honors to Jesus. The principles for which Christians now contend, will then be universally acknowledged; and Jesus, the Christian's king, will be proclaimed the King of the universe. He will be extolled. He will be exalted. He will be honored. And while the tongues of the redeemed in heaven shall be ascribing blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, and dominion unto the Lamb that was slain, a voice more loud than many thunders, and more mighty than many waters, shall go up from all the abodes of perdition, reluctantly confessing Christ to be Lord, to the glory of the Father.

2. This subject calls on the impenitent to consider who it is that they are now resisting, and are likely to resist forever. It is not a tyrant. It is not an oppressor. It is a friend. It is one who has given himself to die for you.

3. This subject shows the impenitent the uselessness

of denying Christ as King. He will reign; he will subdue all; he will bring all to confess him to be King; and you amongst them.

4. The subject shows the fearful result of resisting Christ. The wheel of his government will roll forward with amazing power. Nothing can stop it. You, an insect, attempt to impede it! and are crushed as by a millstone!

SERMON XXIII.

CRUCIFYING THE FLESH, WITH ITS AFFECTIONS AND LUSTS.

GALATIANS v. 24.—"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts."

IT is not my intention to undertake a description of the manner in which *professors* of the Christian religion actually live. This is a work far too great for any of the children of men. No one but he who sitteth on the throne of the universe is able to know it; and no one will fully declare it, till the Son of Man shall make it known at the great day. It is impossible, it would be wicked, for me, or any other one, to declare specifically, how each individual in a church, or how the great mass of the members live. There may be many censurable things in the lives of individuals which indicate that their hearts are not right with God. There may be many commendable things which indicate that the soul

is born of God; and yet it behooves no son of Adam to be very positive in respect to the condition of those who profess to be the people of God.

But though we cannot be positive respecting the condition of those who profess to be Christians, we are authorized to declare explicitly what genuine Christians have done, what they are now doing, and what they will continue to do; for they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.

The subject suggests two inquiries.

I. Who are they that are Christ's?

II. What is meant by crucifying the flesh, with the affections and lusts?

I. Who are they that are Christ's?

All the inhabitants of this world are the property of Christ. He made them, for "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." As their Creator, he has a full, inalienable right to their bodies and their spirits. But the attitude in which this passage contemplates them, is not that of natural right. It is not the ownership of their bodies and their spirits which is here contemplated in the expression, "*They that are Christ's.*" Something more than a mere right to their service, is manifestly implied in this phraseology.

Nor is it merely meant that he died for all. Though this is a truth evidently taught in the scriptures, yet it is not the truth to which the apostle here refers.

By the expression, "They that are Christ's," the sacred writer evidently means, they who are born again, who are renewed in the spirit of their minds, who have become new creatures, in whom old things have passed away, and all things become new. He means to designate those who have actually begun the journey towards Mount Zion—who are owned by the Saviour as his

genuine disciples—and who, through grace, shall at length be admitted to his kingdom.

II. What is meant by crucifying the flesh, with the affections and lusts?

Clearly to answer this question, it is necessary to say that the apostle has, in the preceding passages, specifically enumerated the internal effects of the operations of the Spirit. These he declares to be love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Against these there is no law. They are the results of the efficacious grace of God in the hearts of men, bringing them into a holy conformity to Christ and to the image of our heavenly Father, and preparing them to go and dwell in the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Now if we had no other means than this portion of the context to enable us to settle what is meant by the term "FLESH" in the text, we could not but infer that it is an exact contrast to the fruits of the Spirit, for the scriptures declare that "the flesh lusteth, or contendeth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other. We could not but infer, that as the fruit of the Spirit is love, the fruit of the flesh is hatred; as the fruit of the Spirit is joy, the fruit of the flesh is sorrow; as the fruit of the Spirit is peace, the fruit of the flesh is contention; as the fruit of the Spirit is long-suffering, the fruit of the flesh is immediate revenge; as the fruit of the Spirit is gentleness, the fruit of the flesh is harshness; as the fruit of the Spirit is goodness, the fruit of the flesh is wickedness; as the fruit of the Spirit is faith, the fruit of the flesh is unbelief; as the fruit of the Spirit is meekness, the fruit of the flesh is peevishness; as the fruit of the Spirit is temperance, the fruit of the flesh is intemperance. These are ways in which the state of the soul,

which is denominated the flesh, manifests itself. It is not supposable that all these characteristics are to be found in every impenitent individual. Yet it is not to be denied that these are the dispositions of the flesh; and wherever any one of them exists, it is indicative of a heart alienated from God.

That we have not misapprehended the meaning of the term "flesh," in this instance, is plain, from the 19th, 20th, and 21st verses of this chapter. Here the fruits of the flesh are explicitly declared. Those actions and states of soul which are the fruits of the flesh, are expressly defined. "Now the works of the flesh," saith the apostle, "are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like."

The term flesh here, then, denotes not merely the external deeds of iniquity to which reference is had, in the passage now read. It denotes not merely the formation and worship of idols, nor merely the violation of any one or all of the ten commandments; but it relates also to the inner man, and indicates some iniquity there.

Indeed, all theories which do not recognise this fact, and make it prominent, will fail to reach and remedy the evils of rebellion against God. To suppose that sin is mainly external, or at most, that it penetrates no deeper than the imperative acts of the will, is to leave the ocean of depravity within us untouched; and to provide no remedy for the unholy affections and prevailing lusts, which spontaneously, and always in the individuals in whom they exist, war against the soul. And all the healing of the disease of iniquity, when understood in this light, is, in the language of the prophet, to heal the hurt of the "people slightly, saying, Peace, peace,

when there is no peace." The interior of man is not so innocent, nor so ready, as many suppose, to yield to the demands of the Most High; nor so willing to follow the ways which seem just, and reasonable, and holy. There is, after all, in every human being something which the scriptures denominate the flesh; and this must be subdued, and conquered, and even crucified, before we are fit for the kingdom of Heaven. Whatever else may be said on this subject, the Bible tells us there are lusts which war against the soul, and the renewed soul is required to gain the victory over them.

These are partly external and partly internal. They may be divided into two classes. The first class consists of those in which our bodily appetites, in the widest application of the term, are concerned. The second includes the state of our inner man; and comprises envy, pride, emulation, hatred, variance, strife, and others of the same kind. These all, whether external, including the bodily appetites for forbidden objects, or the interior passions, including the evil actions and operations of the inner man, we are taught, that they who are Christ's, have crucified. But what does the apostle here mean, by saying, that these things are crucified in the people of God?

I reply, that he means, by a slow and painful process, they are extinguishing them. As Christ died on the cross, a lingering and painful death, for the redemption of men, so his disciples are to exterminate whatever in themselves is at variance with his commands, however slow the progress, and painful the operation may be. You all know that when a sword pierces the heart of an individual, he dies instantaneously. But thus our Lord Jesus did not die. He was suspended on the cross. The nails were driven through his hands and his feet. His side, and not his heart, was pierced. By

the loss of blood, by the pain of his sufferings, and by the intenseness of agony, which every attempt to struggle produced, his life departed. It was not a momentary death. It was painful and agonizing. Even the power of struggling was taken away. The comfort which even this could give, was denied, by distending and fastening every member, so that it could not move; and every attempt to move it, would produce piercing distress.

Now, by these facts, the apostle frequently illustrates the condition of genuine Christians. "Knowing this," said Paul, "that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed; that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead, is free from sin." There is a special resemblance between the circumstances of Christ's death for sin, and the death of his people unto sin.

I am not here to be understood, that regeneration is a gradual work. There was a period in the life of every saint which was a period of unbroken iniquity. There was a moment when every exercise of his soul had been sinful. There was a moment immediately succeeding the last, when his soul began to crucify its evil propensities and lusts. Here the soul was renewed. Here the work of regeneration was performed. Henceforth he is a new creature. Henceforth, instead of indulging his evil propensities, he begins a controversy with them, and undertakes their extirpation. He begins to crucify them. Before this moment, the motions of sin which were by the law, did work in his members to bring forth fruit unto death. After this moment, he works to put them to death. Here, then, begins his work of crucifying the flesh, with its affections and lusts.

Here we ought to consider,

I. The manner of this work.

II. The instruments and considerations by which it is wrought.

III. The evidence of advancement made in it.

1. The manner of this work.

This may be learned from the circumstances attending the crucifixion of an individual, and especially of the Saviour, with which it is here compared. It was not the design of those who crucified an individual, that he should die at once. If this had been their design, instead of putting him on the cross, they would have beheaded him, or thrust him through with a sword. But it evidently was the object of this mode of executing an individual, to make him taste the very bitterness of death. So it seems to be the design of Jehovah, to make his people know and appreciate the evil of their sins, and to make them taste the wormwood and the gall of their transgressions. Like the golden calf, which Moses ground to powder, and mingled with water, and made the Israelites drink thereof, that they might see their folly, and acknowledge their wickedness; so those, who are born of the Spirit, are made in this life to suffer under the influence of those unholy propensities, which, in the days of their impenitence, they cherished, and perhaps cultivated. Like the remnant of the Gentile nations in the land of Canaan, the remains of corrupt propensities are thorns in the sides of the saints. This subjects the Christian to a course of vigilant warfare. He is compelled to seize every corrupt propensity. He must arrest every lust of the flesh. He must seize the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; and though, according to the arrangement of Him who hath subjected us, in hope that we shall yet be delivered from this corruptible bondage; *though, according to this arrangement*, he has not the privilege of putting them to immediate death; he is immediately

to begin the work of crucifixion. He must bind, and scourge every unholy passion. He must lead it away to be crucified. He must, (to carry forward the personification,) he must nail its hands and its feet to the cross, so that it shall be impossible for it even to struggle. He must pierce its side, so that it may be weakened. Instead of giving it that nourishment which would tend to keep it alive, he must give it vinegar mingled with gall. And he must faithfully watch it, lest other evil passions which stand around the scene in consternation, should conspire to relieve their friend from suffering, and from death; and thus he must perseveringly deal with each of his corrupt tendencies, till the end of his mortal career. This is the course of the Christian. He is crucifying the flesh, with the affections and lusts. And he does not suppose them to be so few in number, or so feeble in strength, as to give up the ghost in a day, or an hour. He expects to be compelled to engage in the work of crucifying them till the day of his death; and then, as his spirit rises from this world, to utter the shout of victory. The genuine Christian never expects, and never desires to join in that premature shout, which is so often found going forth from the lips of those who never knew what it was even to begin the warfare. He is content to remain at his labor till the work is accomplished, and the victory is won. Consequently, when he has but just begun the work of crucifying his corrupt propensities, he does not stop with the expectation that the evil will immediately expire. He knows, that it is not the nature of his warfare to gain the victory at a single blow. He understands, that as the individual who is crucified, grows faint under the loss of blood, and the wasting of his strength; and thus, under the gradual but constant pressure of distress, gives up the ghost, so it is with the subjugation of his evil propen-

sities. They must be resisted, weakened, overcome. However often they may attempt to rebel, and to disturb the government of the Almighty, they must be reduced and subjugated, and finally through grace be eradicated.

II. By what instruments is it effected?

1. This is not to be accomplished by any infliction of pain or wounds on the body. Some have supposed, that the severe chastisement of the body would prevent the existence, or at least the operation of those lusts which war against the soul; and, consequently, they have subjected their material frame to severe suffering. They have caused stripes to be inflicted on themselves; have subjected themselves to deprivation, and have gone on long pilgrimages. In whatever estimation this may be held in any part of the world, as a means of subjugating the inner man, it will never accomplish it. Christians, indeed, will not be likely to think, that chastisements inflicted on the body will reach the soul, and reclaim it from error. It is not the infliction of pain on ourselves, but a counteraction, through grace, of our internal propensities, that brings us into accordance with the will of Christ.

2. This is to be accomplished by a continual sense of the presence of God. It will always be a powerful incitement to the Christian to remember, "Thou, God, seest me." When the believer regards it as a reality, that the eye of Jehovah is upon him, he will find himself to be sensibly affected, and incited to "crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts."

3. This is to be accomplished by prayer.

It is not to be supposed, that this great warfare can be carried forward continually, without reliance on the grace of God. Nor can they who do not plead for it at all, expect the assistance of the Holy Spirit. They who expect to carry on a successful conflict with their

evil propensities, must give themselves continually to prayer, that the Most High would strengthen them for the conflict, and enable them to persevere till they come off victorious.

4. They need a thorough acquaintance with the Word of God, and with the manner of applying it to the particular circumstances in which they are placed. In this controversy, they are commanded to take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and to have their "feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." If their feet are not thus shod, they will be liable to slip, and to fall in the controversy. Without these arms they can never be victorious.

5. A fifth instrument by which they may be assisted in carrying on this controversy, is a repeated reference to the example of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. For, saith the scripture, "Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin;" ye ought to look unto "Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

6. As a means of encouragement, in thus crucifying the flesh, with the affections and lusts, look forward continually to its results. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and shall eat of the hidden manna; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. This consideration, held distinctly before the eyes of an individual, engaged in a warfare with his own propensities, will exceedingly excite him to perseverance in the painful and constant labor of subduing his own internal corruptions.

III. We proceed now to consider the evidence of advancement which is made by Christians in this work.

It is not to be certainly inferred, by any individual, that because he commits fewer open transgressions than in former times, he is certainly gaining the victory over the flesh. Sin may reign in the souls of men, while the exterior may be comparatively free. There is often an external advancement in morality, which, so far from eradicating our internal depravity, may only conceal it. The scribes and pharisees were compared to sepulchres, which outwardly appeared beautiful, but were inwardly full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. However valuable even an outward morality may be to the welfare of society, and however impossible it be to undergo a real mortification of the flesh, with its affections and lusts, without producing it, we ought never to forget that this alone is no evidence of an internal renovation. Thus the members of our bodies are instruments of holiness or of sin. These may be so impaired by disease, or age, that our depraved hearts cannot use them in the execution of their wicked purposes; or we may be restrained by some apprehended loss of reputation, influence, or other earthly gratification. While, therefore, an external morality is indispensable to the Christian character, and always flows from a renewed soul, it is not to be regarded as a sure evidence of advancement in crucifying the flesh.

Nor are strong impressions of religious truth, and fervent and elevated joy, to be received as certain tokens of internal mortification.

What people ever rejoiced more in God than the Israelites on the borders of the Red Sea? Did not some, of whom the Saviour said, "they received the word with joy," prove to be only temporary Christians? Though the subjugation of the flesh will produce an

internal peace, yet as there is a rejoicing that is evil, we are not to infer from the fact, that we have joy in connexion with religious meditations, that we are actually crucifying our evil propensities.

Nor is the fact, that we pray more readily, especially in the family, and in social meetings, an evidence of advancement in this cause. Though true Christians are always disposed to call upon God in the family, and in the social circle, except where infirmity may place them under restraint, yet the fact of calling on God with increasing interest, is no certain evidence of a mortification of the flesh. I know not but our fleshly propensities may even be gratified, by openly calling upon God. Does any one call in question this statement? Is any one prepared to doubt whether it can be so? Let me ask him what the Saviour meant, when he described a class of men, who *loved* to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets? Did he infer from their praying, that they were the children of the Most High? Did he not plainly intimate that it was a course of abominable hypocrisy? While, therefore, I cannot think, that many amongst us are in danger of *thus* deceiving themselves in respect to growth in grace, I must deliberately tell you, I fear that too many of you are needlessly neglecting prayer in the family, and in the social circle; and thus are giving direct evidence of your neglect to mortify the flesh, with the affections and lusts.

Nor is the fact, that we delight in Christian society, a proof of our advancement in this work. Who delighted more in the society of David than Ahithopel? "We took," said David, "we took sweet counsel together, and walked in company to the house of God." Even Judas, for some reason which we do not now fully understand, was pleased to remain three years with Christ and his disciples. And who does not remember

many, who were apparently delighted with Christian society, but now are wretched apostates?

Now, notwithstanding outward morality, joy in connexion with religious truth, praying more freely in the family, or in the social circle, and delighting in the society of the people of God, are not alone sure evidences of an internal mortification of the flesh, let me not be understood to say they are not duties. They are important duties: and he who neglects them, ought to consider himself to be in danger of losing his soul.

But you may be ready to inquire what are the tokens of advancement, in overcoming the internal propensities, which war against the soul? To this I reply—a gradual, but growing conformation of the inner man to the image of Christ. A gradual reduction, not of the means of unholy gratification, but of the propensities, and tendencies themselves—a gradual overcoming each of the unrighteous propensities to which he is peculiarly exposed. He, that is exposed to be malicious, finds the tendency to this evil gradually diminish; and love to man and to God, rapidly gain strength. He, who is naturally disposed to maintain his rights, and to inflict revenge on any one who infringes them, becomes long-suffering. He, who is inclined to be negligent in his religious duties, finds his negligence supplanted by a holy interest and zeal in them. He, who finds his corrupt appetites and passions continually losing strength, while those of a different class are gradually increasing in their dominion over his conduct, may safely believe that he is gaining the victory. He, who finds the former abating, while love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance, are increasing within him, and ruling over him, has evidence that he is advancing in the work which he professes to have begun. Such an individual, if he endure

unto the end, shall be saved. If he overcome, he shall be admitted to the kingdom of our God, into which nothing can enter that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.

Now, I desire to bring this subject, in its practical bearings, distinctly before your minds, and to ask, individually, what your own condition is? Christians are accustomed to inquire, Whether Christ has been formed in them the hope of glory? They often appear to be perplexed to find some criterion by which to settle this question. But the subject which we bring before you to-day, if justly considered, will help you to put this inquiry at rest: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts." Have you undertaken this work? Though you may not have fully, and forever obtained the victory, have you brought your bodily appetites into subjection? Are your mental corruptions put under strict, and constant restraint? If any one of them asserts his right to subvert the government of God over the soul, are you accustomed to arrest it, as in ancient times they arrested an individual; and nailed him so to the cross, that he could not even struggle, but must die, and that without remedy? If envy rises in your bosom; is it immediately subdued? If wrath; is it arrested? If pride; is it mortified? If a tendency to evil speaking; is it immediately checked? If indolence in spiritual things; is it immediately superseded by the most wakeful industry in the cause of God?

The trait of which we have been speaking to-day, is one of vast importance to those who trust, that they are born of God. It is indeed true, that "They who are Christ's have crucified the flesh." Are ye indeed of this number? And shall ye at length stand on Mount Zion with golden harps in your hands? Shall ye be of

the blessed company, who shall stand on Mount Zion, having washed your garments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; and there ascribe salvation unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb? And is not this worthy of your untiring efforts, during every day of your mortal existence—to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts? O, be faithful unto death, and the Lord shall give you a crown of life.

SERMON XXIV.

THE FEAR OF GOD.

GENESIS xlii. 18.—"I fear God."

THE history of the patriarchs is familiar to you all. The record of the painful occurrences in the house of Jacob has been read with interest and tears, by almost every child in Christendom. The partiality of the father for the eldest son of his favorite wife, excited the envy of the sons of his other wives, and set them to devise injurious projects against the happiness and even the life of their brother. The time at length came for the execution of their evil design. They had gone into the remote pastures of Canaan. And in their absence, the heart of the patriarch became anxious for their welfare, and he said to Joseph, "Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. After seeking long, he found them in the valley of Dothan; but

instead of being received with fraternal affection, he was stripped of the garment which his father had given him, and cast into a pit. Thence he was drawn up, and sold to a company of Midianitish merchants, who carried him to Egypt, and sold him to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, and captain of his guard. Here he was falsely accused and imprisoned, till God prepared the way for his deliverance, and elevation to the government of Egypt. At the specified time, a famine, predicted and provided for by Joseph, came, and extended over all the face of the earth. And Joseph opened all the store-houses of Egypt, and sold unto the Egyptians. And the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph, to buy corn, because the famine was sore in all lands. Now, when Jacob knew that there was corn in Egypt, he said unto his sons, "Why do ye look one upon another? And he said, Behold I have heard, that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die." And they went down, and stood before Joseph. And he knew them, but made himself strange unto them; and spake roughly unto them, and said unto them, "Ye are spies." And they said, Nay, my Lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. We are all one man's sons. We are true men. Thy servants are no spies. And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land are ye come. And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not. And Joseph said unto them, That is it, that I said unto you, "Ye are spies." And he put them all together into ward three days. But, on mature reflection, he felt that their detention in prison, under the pretence that they were spies, might be a violation of the prin-

ciples of righteousness, and that he might be incurring the displeasure of God; and he proposed to them conditions of release, saying, "This do, and live, *for I fear God.*"

This fear should daily control every Christian. No influence on the feelings, or the character, can be more salutary. What greater preservative from wrong can there be in youth, than the constant presence of a parent, whose feelings we regard, whose opinions we respect, and whose judgment we reverence.

And if the presence of a parent is so salutary in restraining us from transgression, how much more so must the impression be, that we act in the view of the Almighty? And how appropriate to the condition of an immortal being is the state of mind, which is described in the saying, "I fear God."

"I fear God."

I know he is here. He is everywhere. I cannot go from his presence, nor flee from him. If I ascend up into heaven, he is *there.* If I make my bed in hell, behold he is *there.* If I go to the farthest east, or dwell in the extreme west, even *there* shall his hand lead me, and his right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall become light round about me; yea, the darkness hideth not from him, but the night shineth as the day. The darkness and the light are both alike to him. To live, and move, and be in the presence of so great and adorable a being, cannot but excite emotions of awe. It cannot fail, if rightly considered, to produce a salutary fear in the heart of every child of Adam.

"I fear God."

He knows all my actions. Not one of them has been concealed from his view. The sins of my childhood are known to him. They are written in his book. The

iniquities of my youth are kept in his remembrance. The transgressions of maturer years are not hidden from his eyes. However I may close my eyes on the circumstances in which they are committed; however I may try to persuade myself that my career is justifiable; yet to him my actions appear as they are. No palliation nor excuse can cause him to take a different view of them from that with which he beholds them.

He understands my thoughts. "There is not a thought in my heart, but he knows it altogether." There is no operation of my intellect, which he does not readily perceive. On all my perceptions, reasonings, and conclusions, his eye rests. *I* may mistake the process by which I come to a conclusion, but God knows it. I may be unwilling that others should understand my false reasonings, or the unwarrantable manner in which I arrive at results; but Jehovah understands them all. The subterfuges, which a perverted heart, or a soul full of prejudice, casts over its own doings, do not conceal it from the Most High.

He knows all my opinions. If interest, or the fear of man, or the pride of consistency shall influence me to give, as my view of facts or of truths, a sentiment at variance with what seems to me to be according to truth, he sees it all. He fully comprehends the hypocrisy of the transaction, and abhors the iniquity.

He knows my motives. Men may be deceived by appearances. *They* look on the exterior. In no other way can they arrive at a decision respecting the considerations which determine our actions. But God looketh on the heart. Every motive is perfectly exposed to his view. He sees them with a vastly greater degree of ease, and knows them far more accurately, than we know any of the actions of those around us. He knows what it is in us that moves us to retain his word in our

families; what it is that influences us to come to his house; what it is that incites any of us to profess to be his disciples. He understands whether, in any of our religious duties, we have a regard for the honor of God and the promotion of his cause; or are influenced mainly by a desire to produce in others an impression that we are devout. He knows whether our apparent zeal for the Lord arises from a deep and affecting interest in his cause, or from a regard to some selfish object which we wish to effect. He knows whether our failure to be in his courts, and in the social assemblies of his saints, is owing to real hindrances; or comes from a disposition which chooses not to mingle with his people, and is ready, at all times, to invent some excuse which shall pacify the conscience, and preserve the character from reproach.

He knows all our feelings. There is no affection in our hearts which is not entirely open to his view. If there be a love of the world, it is fully seen by him; and it is also seen that the love of the Father is not there. If there be a disrelish for the service of Jehovah, this also is known, although concealed by every external appearance of devotion. If there be hostility towards his people, this, in all its operations, is clearly understood. If there be a desire to hinder any of the plans adopted by his children to counteract sin, or to promote the best interests of his kingdom; however secret it may be, however shielded from detection by the plea of prudence, or fear of reaction, with terrible injury to the cause; this feeling, with all its criminality, is clearly seen by him. No feeling nor tendency of soul, however concealed from the world, or from the brethren, or from ourselves, escapes his scrutiny.

I fear God; for he is holy. To some, it may seem strange that the holiness of a being should be a ground

of fear. But there is no other consideration which invests the character of Jehovah with such fearfulness, as that of his holiness. And this is as true of those who are holy, as of those whose sinfulness exposes them to his indignation. No other trait is more prominent in the character of devout men, than the fear of God. And this reverential regard for him does not abate, even when the soul becomes perfect in glory. When John had a view of the heavenly world, he heard them "sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy?" The idea, then, that a Christian does not fear God, is utterly unwarrantable. I cannot contemplate the justice, the mercy and veracity of Jehovah, nor see these traits mingled together in that adorable perfection of character which we call holiness, without a deep and controlling fear of the Almighty. And I am fully convinced that his religion is vain, who does not tremble in view of the holiness of his Maker. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,"—the first thing in true piety. And he who can speak of God, or even think of him, without fear, is far from speaking or thinking as becometh saints. The lightness and apparent indifference with which the name of God, of Christ, and of the Spirit, together with the holiness or justice of Jehovah, are used, indicate an absence of the fear of the Creator, and a practical ignorance of his holy perfections. None of all the mortals that dwell on the face of the earth, can behold the glory of the Lord, without being moved and almost overwhelmed by the sight. So affecting was the manifestation to Moses, that he said, "I exceedingly fear and tremble." Though claims to peculiar inter-

course with Jehovah be set forth—though the most decided assertions of spiritual communications with him be made—yet we are not warranted to receive them as founded in truth, unless they be attended with a most sacred fear of God; for he is holy. In comparison with him, the heavens are unclean, and the very angels are charged with folly. And are we more pure by nature or by practice than angels? And can we, without awe, approach him who cannot look on our sins without abhorrence? The deluded and the hypocrite may hear of God, and may mention his adorable name without fear, but the children of the kingdom will approach their Maker with a searching and a penetrating reverence. The former are described as "spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding without fear. Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees, whose fruit withereth; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."

"I fear God;" for he has a settled aversion to sin.

This is his nature, and he is immutable—immutable in his attachment to holiness, and in his opposition to sin. From the earliest times to the present day, he has manifested his detestation of every sort of iniquity. In his view it is an "evil and bitter thing;" and no pretensions, or apologies, can alter his view of our transgressions; they will, in each instance, appear to him as they really are. It makes no difference under what exterior the act be committed—whether of open and plainly intentional rebellion, or secretly, and under the mask of a religious profession. To every kind of iniquity he has an utter detestation. Now, who that knows the holiness of Jehovah, and his constant abhorrence of sin, will not fear him? Can a human being, who is convinced that he has violated the law of God—who understands that during many years he was constantly engaged

in rebellion against him—who feels, that even if he has been born of God, he has not been perfect, but is chargeable every day, in the view of Infinite Holiness, with many transgressions—can he live without fear? Considering the strength of his unsubdued propensities to evil, will he not be apprehensive that he may incur the displeasure of a holy God? Even Paul labored to keep under his body, and to bring it into subjection, lest, after having preached to others, he should be a cast-away—should be so loathsome in the view of Jehovah, as to be excluded from his presence and favor. No one that duly appreciates the purity of his Maker, can refrain from trembling, lest there should be found enough of sin in himself to provoke God to cast him off, or at least to cause him to withhold the light of his countenance, and to give sad testimonies of his indignation. Who can think of the settled aversion of Jehovah to every sin, and not be alarmed for his own soul? Who can remember his determinate abhorrence of every unholy feeling and motive, without alarm lest he should fail of eternal life. A holy man, who wrote as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, for the instruction of all future generations, said—"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me;" and he prayed, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults; purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me." Such feelings have been common to all the saints. None of them has ever been able to look upon the Divine Being, and to consider his aversion to sin, without trembling lest he should be cast away from the presence of Jehovah.

"I fear God;" for he inflicts severe chastisements, even in this life, on such of his people as wander from him.

Nothing is more sure than the assertion, that he

chastens every disobedient child in his family. I know that those who have only the appearance of piety, often go through the whole of their mortal days, without being made to suffer the strokes of divine correction. But their afflictions are reserved for a future time, and an everlasting duration. If any are without chastisement, they are, as the scripture saith, "bastards, and not sons." "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." The saints are severely chastened for their sins, even in this life. The sin of David brought upon him alarming frowns from heaven. Disease entered his family, and fastened upon the child of his shame, and carried it, notwithstanding the weeping and fasting of his father, to an early grave. Discord entered his family, and murder followed in the train. An aspiring son stole the hearts of the people, and seized the throne, and drove his mourning father away, accompanied only by a few friends, while a man of Bahurim came forth and cursed him as he went.

Moses, for claiming the power to bring water from the rock, which could be done only by God, was forbidden to enter the land of Canaan.

Hezekiah, for showing the servants of the king of Babylon the riches of his house, and of the temple, was told that all these things should be carried away into Babylon.

Josiah, for going to fight with Necho, king of Egypt, contrary to the command of God, was wounded in battle, and gave up the ghost.

I might cite other instances in which, for particular sins, God has sent fearful chastisements upon his people. But these fully confirm the principle which I have asserted; and they are sufficient to make every Christian tremble. I fear to be inactive in the service

of my Maker, lest judgments should come upon me. I fear to interpret and declare any of the opinions or feelings of my own soul, as rules for others, lest the Most High should be offended by my presumption in supplanting the laws of his empire. I fear to indulge in hostility or in reproaches against his people, lest Jehovah should visit me with his censures. I fear to judge any one to be hypocritical in his Christian professions, unless his doctrines are at variance with those which God has taught, or his life with the laws that God has made. I fear to abandon the house of the Lord, or the social assemblies of his saints, lest he should send leanness into my soul, and I be left to walk in darkness, and see no light. I fear to withhold children or friends from the service of the Lord, lest he should remove from them this hindrance, by taking away my life, or removing them from my control. I fear to withhold my possessions from his use, lest he should reduce me to want, and transfer what he has loaned me to those who will use it for his glory. I fear the neglect of acknowledging God in all my ways, lest he should leave me to try the friendship of this world, unprotected by him. If in these ways I sin against him; if in any way I forsake his holy commandments; he will visit me with stripes, even though he take not away his tender mercies from me.

"I fear God;" by him I must be judged. It is a serious thing to be judged of man's judgment. In all those cases where property, or character, or liberty, or life is involved, it is a serious thing to be brought before a human tribunal. The judgment of the scoffer against religion and God, and the sayings of those professed disciples who may so far wander from their duty as to engage in acts of scoffing, is a light thing, and is to be totally disregarded. And the judgment of the most

solemn and impartial of earthly tribunals, is a light thing, compared with the decisions of the Almighty. However weighty this cause may be, it must be tried and decided by him. All my deeds, my words, and my feelings, must pass his scrutiny and receive his sentence. Do you say, if I am a Christian, I ought not to fear? The Saviour has not thus instructed me. "I will forewarn you," said he to his disciples, "whom ye shall fear—fear him who hath power to destroy both soul and body in hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him." In view of such a Judge, who will not fear? I wish never to walk abroad without having the fear of this righteous judge before my eyes. I wish never to rise up, or to lie down, without an affecting regard to him who shall finally examine my actions, and award my destiny. I desire not to open the Word of God, and read the rules by which I shall finally be tried, without this fear. I desire never to enter the sanctuary without an impression that he whom I come to worship, will soon sit as my judge. I desire to hold no intercourse with my companions in probation, without an affecting anticipation of my final account. I wish never to speak of my brethren here, without remembering that I must meet them hereafter, and give an account of all my sayings to the Judge of quick and dead.

Now, if such a fear of God occupy our souls, then it will be impossible not to speak reverentially respecting him.

The Jews had such a reverence for their Creator, that for many centuries they never even pronounced the great name by which he is known. Jehovah, his adorable, incommunicable name Jehovah, was not uttered by them even in reading the scriptures. The other names of the Deity were, indeed, used, but always with the appearance of great reverence. Now,

though their regard for the name of God may have grown into superstition, is there no danger of the opposite extreme? Is there no danger that we shall use too familiarly the name of God, of Christ, and of the Spirit? Let me appeal to your own consciences, and demand whether you do not sometimes, nay often, speak of the adorable God, without the reverence which becomes the mention of his name? Do you in these instances always feel that you speak of the omnicient, omnipresent, holy, glorious Governor and Judge of the world? Do you speak of him with the fear which it becomes a poor, sinful, dependent mortal always to cherish towards the majesty of heaven and earth? And may not a neglect here be the reason why he hides his face from you, and confers not his favors on the family, or the church, where he does not find the reverential regard due to his majesty? And ought you not to cherish a more sacred fear of Jehovah, that you may speak more reverently of his name, and attributes, and works? And would not this fear have a salutary influence on your intercourse with all around you; diffusing a more sacred regard for Him that ruleth in heaven above, and doeth his good will among the children of men? The prayer of Daniel, which was heard in heaven, and answered by the sending of Gabriel to fly swiftly and carry a message from the Almighty, *this prayer, which ascended as sweet incense before God, thus begins:* "O Lord, *the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments.*" And the Saviour has taught us to say, "*Hallowed be thy name.*" With this rule we must comply, if we would receive his blessing.

Again: If this fear of God be in us, we shall have a happy influence on others. Our conversation will evince that there is something in our hearts, which is

not known to the world, nor felt by such as are alienated from God.

Our lives will tell to all around us, that there is something in the fear of God, which is calculated to diffuse a heavenly savor over all our feelings and actions.

In ways innumerable—in ways which it is impossible for us to describe, or others to see—a grace will distil on those around us like drops of the morning dew; and blessings of immeasurable value, and eternal duration, will descend upon them.

Brethren—let the fear of God dwell at all times in your hearts; for "to that man," saith Jehovah, "will I look, who is humble, and of a contrite spirit, and who trembleth at my word."

My brethren and fathers in the ministry—

I have no doubt but you deeply feel the importance of personally fearing God. And I have no need to say to you, that the inculcation of this truth is intimately connected with your success in the ministry. But is there not special reasons for giving this doctrine a prominence in the instructions of the sanctuary? Does not the immensity of the divine power and knowledge require it? Do not the perfections of justice, and mercy, and faithfulness, demand it? Does not the judgment of the great day, to which we and our hearers are hastening, urge it? And have not ministers fearfully neglected so to present Jehovah to their people, as to lead them to set him on the throne of their hearts, and to make him their fear and their dread continually? And is not the public mind beginning to disclose the neglect of this duty? Whence comes the fearlessness with which so many who bear the Christian name, mention the Almighty? Whence come those irreverent ways of speaking of Christ, and especially of the Holy Spirit? Whence arises the prevailing indifference to the law of

the Lord, and to many of his ordinances? And from what else can it have come, that the lives of so large a portion of those who wish to be regarded as devout, seem to imply a persuasion in their souls, that God is as well pleased with an unauthorized, and in some instances a forbidden act of worship, as by one which he has explicitly commanded? Whence all this disregard of Jehovah, this fearlessness of the majesty of heaven and earth, which now manifests itself in those who are not only members of our congregations, but even of our churches? Is it not possible, that as ministers of the living God, we may have failed to do our duty? Under a solemn sense of our responsibility, shall we not endeavor to restore to the public mind, and especially to the churches, that fear of God which now seems to be rapidly declining, and may soon vanish? Ought we not so to preach, as to exalt the Lord our God in the minds of all who hear? Ought we not so to administer the truths and ordinances committed unto us, as to produce an affecting and controlling reverence for Jehovah? Wherever this fear of God which has so much declined, shall revive, we shall see men less confident in their own opinions, and more earnest to know what the will of the Lord is. We shall see them come reverently to the sanctuary, and hear them devoutly say, "Surely the Lord is in this place, though I knew it not." We shall see the law of the Lord guiding their feelings, and controlling their lives. The gospel will, then, prove the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation. Our churches will be scenes of silent and holy searchings, and relentings of soul. Agitation will overtake the hypocrite, and paleness gather over the face of the impenitent. And many shall turn from their transgressions, who are "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

SERMON XXV.

CHRISTIAN FIRMNESS.

DANIEL vi. 10.—"Now, when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a-day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."

DANIEL was a man greatly beloved of God. Though an unbending advocate for truth and righteousness—though a thorough opposer to idolatry—he was raised by a Holy Providence to the first station under the Persian monarch. Over this vast empire there were set an hundred and twenty princes; and over these princes there were three presidents, of whom Daniel was the first. The reason why this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, was because an excellent spirit was in him, and the king thought to set him over the realm. Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none, forasmuch as he was faithful; neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God. And it is worthy of notice, that the ungodly ordinarily assail the servants of the Most High, in those particulars respecting which God has claimed their services. Obedience to the moral law, or to any positive statute of Christ's kingdom, has often been an occasion of calling forth their severe censure, and awakening a determination to overthrow them. There was one characteristic of Daniel which

had not escaped their knowledge. They knew that he was a man of prayer. They understood that he was so attached to this work, as not easily to be driven from it. "Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said unto him, King Darius, live forever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors and the princes, the counsellors and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions." These men were forming a project to accomplish the destruction of Daniel. They knew his love of God, and his frequency in prayer. They supposed that he could not live thirty days without prayer. And hence, by having the prohibition extend during so long a period, they expected that he would be impelled, by a sense of duty, to transgress the statute, and be doomed to be put into the den of lions. You will readily see what opinion the Babylonian idolaters had of the piety of Daniel. They supposed it to be morally impossible for him to live a month without prayer. They did not believe that the terrors of death could restrain him. O, how different the character of Daniel, in the view of the ungodly, from that of some in modern times! Now, the contemner of God and his ordinances has no idea, that the terror of a lion's den is requisite to make those, who profess to be worshippers of Jehovah, abandon the practice of calling upon God,—by a so much firmer hold did the ancient saints cleave to God, than is supposed to be found in those who now name the name of Christ. Hence, the presidents, the governors, and the princes implored the king, saying, "Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

Wherefore, King Darius signed the writing and the decree." Now all was secure. The mischievous plot was laid. Nothing more was desired, but to know that Daniel prayed. And this they had no doubt he would do. With a malignant assurance that their object would now be easily gained, they waited for the occurrence which would accomplish what had been so successfully begun. All the rulers of Babylon—idolatrous Babylon—were here combined, not to induce a servant of heaven to pray, but to put him to death for calling upon his God. This was not concealed from Daniel. "*He knew that the writing was signed.*" This writing doomed to death the man who should make supplication, during the next thirty days, to any god or man, save the Persian king. Here, then, was a time, when the mind of Daniel must have been brought to look distinctly at the consequences of perseverance in calling upon God. Before him, he could see the settled operation of the laws of the Medes and Persians, which alter not. He could look forward to the day, when, from his high elevation in the government, he should be taken and cast alive into the den of lions. With this affecting and dreadful end before him, the heart of an ordinary man would have been appalled. Weighty thoughts must have rushed in upon the mind. Considerations of mighty bearing would have pressed upon the soul. Amongst these, the man of God might have reasoned.—I alone, of all the rulers of Babylon, fear God. If I am removed from this station, mighty evils will come in upon the kingdom. Injustice will walk abroad without restraint. The cause of God requires some friend of righteousness and truth to be near the throne. If I retain this station, I can do much for the poor, afflicted, depressed sons of my people, who are scattered through these provinces, sitting by the side of the rivers, and hanging their harps

upon the willows; while, on every side, the proud sons of Babylon walk, demanding, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" The amount of good which I may do in my present station is immense, and if I forfeit it, what will become of my poor countrymen in their captivity! Besides, it is proper always to be prudent. Here is a law, which, if I violate, I must be devoured by lions. And this mighty evil, and suffering, and this dreadful death may be easily avoided. If it required the entire abandonment of my religion, the case would be very different in its nature. But it demands only a particular portion of it. It takes away not my right to profess to be a follower of Abraham in the faith. It takes not away my right to love God, or to do his will in any other respect. The only thing prohibited is the making of a petition to God during thirty days. And when consequences of such immense weight hang upon this one point; when all the interests of my captive countrymen and of religion are suspended upon this one particular; may I not omit to do it, and thus preserve my useful life? And, besides, God is a merciful being, and in such straits he will deal kindly with his servant; and will regard my motive in abstaining from prayer; and he may even deem it expedient, in these circumstances, that I should for the present omit this duty.— Were Daniel like some of modern times, we should expect to read in his history such reasonings as these. We should expect to see him putting his duty into one side of the scales of expediency, and the advantages which he hoped to gain, into the other; and carefully weighing his duty by the temporary advantage of neglecting it. But no such carnal reasoning is found in the history of Daniel. With him, prayer was as uniform as the movements of the sun. Nor is there an intimation, that it was not as necessary to the life of

godliness, as the rising of the sun is to the light and general warmth of the day.

He might have reasoned also, that there is a way of serving God in this respect, by which he could elude the vigilance of the Babylonians. He might have adopted the opinion, that, under such circumstances, a precise compliance with forms is not essential. And here, indeed, seems to have been a suitable occasion for bringing such a fact to the world if it were so. Had Daniel only known that there is no need of formally praying in the family or in the closet; had he understood that all his desires, and inclinations, and feelings are prayer; had he known that in whatever else, or however intensely he might be engaged, it is all prayer; and hence, if he never directly called upon God, he was always praying, it would have been easy for him to have, in his own opinion, at the same time, discharged his duty, and escaped the malignity of those who would destroy him for making his supplications to Jehovah! But this was never revealed to the prophets nor to the apostles. Even when occasions occurred which seemed to demand, *if it were allowable ever to grant it*, even on occasions which demanded it, it was not unfolded. Daniel, a prophet of the most high God, a man greatly beloved in heaven—a man whose services were apparently necessary to the preservation of his countrymen—was now in a condition of imminent danger. Had there been a way in which God could have been served as well as he now is, this would have been the time for its disclosure. One would suppose, that the Holy Ghost, who directed him and protected him in all his trials, would now have taught him to pray with the heart alone. One would be inclined to believe, that Daniel would have been told, by him, who sustained him when he fed on pulse, and who made his countenance and that of his companions

fairer than those who ate the flesh of idolatrous sacrifices, who sustained Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace, so that no hair of their head was scorched, and no smell of fire was upon their garments—one would suppose, that in this hour he would have revealed to Daniel, that he had utterly mistaken the duty of prayer; that he had all along erred in believing it necessary to go into his chamber, and kneel, and utter his wants in the hearing of Jehovah. One would think, that Gabriel, who, on other occasions, was sent to fly swiftly to the beloved man, would suddenly have been there, to correct his error, and show him how he could even more acceptably worship God, and yet preserve his own life! O, how silent were all heaven, how unmoved were his friends above, while they saw the beloved Daniel engage in a service, the form of which was not required, and whose use would send him hastily into the den of lions! On the supposition, that praying with the heart alone is all that God claims; on the supposition, that no worship is so acceptable to him as that which is entirely informal; how can we account for the fact, that Daniel was suffered to err in respect to his duty to God, and, in consequence of this error, to violate a statute of the kingdom? If informal prayer, if prayer with the heart alone, is all that can reasonably be required, then we can see no iniquity in the prohibition which the presidents and princes procured to be enacted. We can see no iniquity in their carrying this decree into execution. Daniel, according to this reasoning, was continually doing an improper and a useless service; and it was right that, for this error, he should be chastised and reclaimed.

But this species of prayer was not satisfactory to Daniel, nor to Daniel's God. The prophet could not be turned aside from the true worship of Jehovah. He

seems never to have sought for a way in which he might evade, on the one hand, a full performance of his duty to God, and on the other, the vengeance of Babylon. He knew what prayer is, and that the spirit, which is satisfied with its own movements, while it does not worship God according to his own appointments, is not of God. He understood that we are not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies, nor obey it in the lusts thereof. He knew that we are not to yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but to yield ourselves (*not our hearts alone*) but ourselves, unto God, as those that are alive from the dead; and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God. The heart, then, is to be fully interested in prayer. But the heart alone is not enough; our members are to be used as instruments of righteousness. The spirit of a man must enter wholly into this work; but this does not excuse the thoughts, nor the tongue. And it is as impossible to have a spirit of prayer, which does not put its possessor into the attitude and the work of prayer, as it is to have a principle of natural life which does not set the heart to beat, the blood to circulate, and the limbs to move. Different attitudes indeed may exist in different individuals; God forbid that I should prescribe them. What would be sinful in health and vigor, may be desirable and commendable in one who is wasting away under the operation of painful disease. Prayer never can be acceptable which does not include the spirit and the form of a petition, at least in the thoughts. Prayer should ordinarily put into undivided and combined use the feelings, the thoughts, and the tongue. This last was the manner in which Daniel prayed. His prayer was discernible by mortals, as well as by the omniscient God. "He went into his house, and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled

upon his knees three times a-day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." Daniel was accustomed to pray in this manner. In this instance no new form of prayer was adopted; what he did here, he had done before. Though he was praying neither in Jerusalem, nor in the mountain of Samaria, he did not fail to kneel upon his knees three times a-day. This prayer, notwithstanding all these formalities, was acceptable to God; and this habit of prayer was no secret to the dwellers at Babylon. This example was always an annoyance to the idolatrous city. From day to day they beheld it. They knew the prophet's attachment to it; and when they wished to place a net where they knew that it would take him, they spread it, not in the halls of dignity, nor in the assemblies of pleasure, nor at the tables of luxury, but in the apartment of prayer. Here they were sure that he would go, and the event proved, that the plan was well adapted to accomplish their wicked purpose.

But Daniel, not intimidated by the edict of the king, prayed. Though he knew that for this violation of the laws of the empire, he should be cast into the den of lions, he made supplication to his God. This cruelty, however astonishing, is but an extreme illustration of the malignity of the human heart. It would not suffer a poor, dependent mortal, to go and pray for the things which he needs, and give thanks for the mercies which he enjoys, to the Father of lights, without making this intercourse with heaven an occasion of cruel death. There is nothing in their brethren of the human family which the ungodly so hate, as their calling on the name of the Lord. The voice of prayer ascending before God, especially the voice of solitary prayer, enkindles terror, and sometimes wrath in their bosoms. There is nothing which Satan will try to hush, or intimidate

into silence, sooner than the cries of the children of God to their Father in Heaven. Opposition to true, genuine, formal, and yet spiritual prayer to God, is no new thing in the world. It was long ago revealed, not to the shepherds in Bethlehem, nor to the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, but to the idolaters who dwelt on the plains of ancient Babylon. Here it was, that an inspired prophet, for entering into his chamber, and praying three times a day according to his custom, was exposed to undergo the most cruel death.

But God has not left us without a test of this prayer. Had this kind of approach to Jehovah, been displeasing to the majesty of heaven and earth—had God abhorred this manner of coming before him, and pouring forth his supplications—he would now have abandoned the prophet.

The day of trial came. These presidents and governors assembled. Daniel was not with them. They found him, *praying and making supplication before his God.* "Then they came near before the king, and spake concerning the king's decree: Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any god or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Then answered they, and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the captivity of the children of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh *his petition three times a-day.* Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself; and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O

king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, that no decree nor statute which the king establisheth, may be changed. Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said, Daniel, thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords, that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel."

The king retired to his palace. An unusual feeling pervaded him. Agitation came upon him. He who then governed almost all the nations and tribes of men, was in agony, on account of one praying man. No food was brought before the king. Music, which can charm away a multitude of evils, had no charm for him. On that dreary night, it was not brought before him. Sleep, which can assuage for a season the agony of the soul, approached not to him. Very early in the morning, this greatest of earthly monarchs rose. The majesty of his imperial elevation, did not retain him within his palace; and he was seen walking in haste. But where was he going? O, he remembered the man who kneeled down three times a-day, and prayed; and he was hastily going to the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel, and said, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Then the man who had kneeled upon his knees, and had prayed three times a-day, replied, "O king, live forever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. Then was the king exceed-

ing glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den; and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God." This is the protection which the Almighty gives to those who will not be turned aside from a formal, and yet spiritual calling upon his name.

But a widely different doom awaited those who opposed the praying man. The king commanded, and they brought those men that had accused Daniel. Consider now who his accusers were. They were one hundred and twenty princes, and the two presidents who had been associated with the prophet in the control of the kingdom. They constituted the whole government of the vast Assyrian Empire. They composed a company far more influential and powerful, than would be found in a collection of the chief magistrates of every state in our Union. Considering their vast influence, we should suppose that a popular insurrection would have been excited, and vast armies collected, and a tedious, and direful, and destructive civil war would have raged. But no tumult was excited. No rebellion burst forth. The passions of the people were hushed into an affecting stillness. There were no bursts of popular indignation even in idolatrous Babylon, when they saw one hundred and twenty princes, and two presidents, summoned by the emperor to go into the same den of lions into which they had cast the praying Daniel. The Lord who stilleth the raging of waters, hushed into silence those passions which, had they broke forth, would have been as uncontrollable as the tempests. The work proceeded. They cast those men who had accused Daniel into the den of lions; them, their children, and their wives.

Now the time had come for Jehovah to stamp on

their course his mark of approbation, or of disapprobation. Had they been right in making the prayer of Daniel an occasion of casting him into the den of lions, this was the time for God to appear for their deliverance. Had there been anything improper, or criminal, in the manner of Daniel's prayer, this was the time to have manifested it. The praying of the prophet three times a-day, kneeling in his chamber, was now to undergo the decision of the omnicient God. An empire was gazing to see the result. The princes and the presidents were now in the den of lions. But no supernatural agitation assailed the monarch. No night was spent in fasting. No uncommon wakefulness haunted the royal couch. No angel was sent to stop the mouths of the ferocious beasts. An affecting record, is all that remains of the princes who arrayed themselves against the praying Daniel. "The lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces, or ever they came to the bottom of the den."

Having listened attentively to this interesting narrative, will you now go to Daniel's God, and take him to be your God? The care which he showed to Daniel, the protection which he gave to this servant in an hour when the ungodly rushed upon him to destroy him, ought to commend him to your affection and your confidence. He is worthy to be believed, obeyed, and adored. To those who call on his name, he will reveal himself in hours of calamity and distress. He gives his servants courage to go onwards in their course, though hosts encamp against them. They who faithfully call on his name, shall be as Mount Zion, which can never be moved. Give me the conviction that I have sincerely sought the God of Daniel—give me the persuasion that I have committed my cause to him, according to his commandments, and I need no more. I can look calmly

on the waves of mortal trouble as they roll. I can sit secure amidst the beatings of earthly tempests. I can rise above the calamities of this world; and relying on my Protector, I can go forward, rejoicing that my name is written in heaven. No earthly calamity can daunt me. But in these trials I need to know, not only the care of God for his people, but my own fidelity in his service. I must have a confidence that I have sought him, not according to the dictates of my own fancy, but by the rules of his holy word. No other mode will stand in the day of trial. No other mode will call forth his protection in the hour of adversity, nor induce him to make a way for our deliverance. To him I exhort you to commit yourselves in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator. Then shall you know the richness of his grace in this life, and the blessedness of dwelling before him in eternity.

And whilst I hold before your eyes prospects so cheering, I would not leave you in darkness respecting the manner in which blessings so rich and heavenly may be obtained. I would set before you the example of the prophet, and entreat you to walk in his steps. Do you doubt the correctness of holding forth before men the conduct of other men as an example? So do I. I would exhort you never to follow, as a pattern, the steps of any man whom God has not authorized by miracles as striking as that of closing the mouths of lions, who were ready to devour him. Whoever shall undertake to follow implicitly the examples of other than these, will probably drown his soul in perdition. This will be invariably true, where the examples which they follow are different from those of the prophets and the apostles. The lives of the ancient saints have been reviewed by the Almighty; and this review he has published to the world. We know those parts of their lives which God approves; we know the parts which he censures. And

in all those parts which he approves, he sets them before us, that we may walk in their steps. In some respects their lives illustrate portions of duty, which could not be exemplified by our Lord Jesus Christ. The Saviour never sinned, and consequently he never could be an example of repentance. He had no occasion to rely on the righteousness of another for salvation, and, therefore, never had, and never could have, evangelical faith. He had no occasion to humble himself before God, nor to make confession of sin; and in this respect could not be our pattern. Though, in respect to his human nature, he was humble as a creature, yet he could not be as a sinner. In all these respects the children of God have duties to perform, which could not be performed by our Lord Jesus Christ; and hence the propriety and necessity of having, in these respects, other examples than that of our Lord Jesus Christ; examples which are attested by the finger of God. Though Jesus was a perfect example of obedience to the law, and in this respect ought to be followed, yet he could not be a pattern of the exercise of the Christian graces, for he had no occasion to repent, believe, or humble himself for sin.

But all these Christian graces are illustrated in the feelings and actions of the ancient saints; and hence they are set before us every where in the New Testament as examples. The Holy Ghost has enjoined on us, in respect to them, "Be not slothful, but followers of those who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises. And guided by this infallible authority, I now hold up before you, as an example, the beloved man of whom you have just heard; I hold him forth as a man of prayer. So accustomed was he to go into his chamber, and kneel down upon his knees, and pray three times a-day, and give thanks, that all the princes of prayerless

Babylon knew it. So strong was their opinion of his attachment to this delightful service, that they did not suppose that any terror, or any prospect of death, would hinder him. O, how different an impression had the praying Daniel made on those around him, from that which is found in scoffers around us! Now no terror is thought necessary to influence those who profess to have the spirit of Daniel, to demolish their family altars, and cease to kneel twice a day, and pray and give thanks to God. A few soft and flattering words, a few false pretensions to inspiration, a few charges of hypocrisy, are thought by the prayerless of modern times, to be sufficient to turn aside from such prayer as that of the prophet, and of the Saviour, and of the apostles, those who have vowed to perform it. And in this, I lament to say, they have proved in some instances successful. Now the wicked find no occasion to introduce hungry lions, for the purpose of terrifying those who have professed thus to worship God, from the right ways of the Lord. But Daniel, notwithstanding the array of death, went deliberately into his chamber, and in the midst of myriads of idolaters, poured out his soul unto him that is able to save; and his God, whom he served continually, delivered him. He sent his angel and closed the lions' mouths, so that they hurt him not; while all the bones of the opposers of his prayers, were broken in pieces.

And while you meditate on this wonderful man, and on his wonderful deliverance, walk in his steps. Be neither intimidated, nor flattered, nor deluded into an abandonment of such prayer as that of the prophet. Let your souls be deeply interested in the cause of God, in his honor, and in the salvation of men. Let the warmth of internal piety control your thoughts, and bring them into the work of supplication; and as it flows forth, let

it employ your members as instruments of righteousness; and let your tongues call upon God, and speak his praise. Thus, imitating the prophet, may ye live; thus may ye walk; thus may ye be delivered. Thus will God set you up above your enemies round about, and fill you with gladness. You shall grow like the palm tree—you shall flourish like the cedar in Lebanon. Your enemies shall turn away in dismay; shame shall cover their faces; and God shall pour out his indignation on the families that call not on his name.

SERMON XXVI.

INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY GHOST ON THE HEARTS OF CHRISTIANS.

2 Corinthians xiii. 14.—"The communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all."

We are so in the habit of hearing this passage used at the close of worship, when all are in a hurry to depart, and when so many other objects are beginning to rush into the mind, that it has made very little impression on our hearts. We have rarely given ourselves time to think of the blessings to which it relates. We have rarely thought that it is a prayer for the richest of all the divine favors. Let us, therefore, now solemnly stop and consider its meaning. "*The communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all.*" In order to a full understanding of its import, it will be necessary to consider the context. Here it is connected in the same sentence with the passage, The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

and the love of God. Salvation is the fruit of the love of Jehovah; and hence, we are exhorted to behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us. Salvation is through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Ye know," said the apostle, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

Now, as the preceding members of the verse are designed to state the work of the Father and the Son, in human salvation, this member must also be used to denote the operations of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of those who shall be saved. The phrase, "communion of the Holy Ghost," then, is equivalent to the expression in common usage, "The sanctifying influences of the Spirit." The meaning of the prayer, therefore, is, that the Holy Ghost would carry forward in us all those operations which are necessary to prepare us for the kingdom of God above. Keeping this definition in mind, let us now proceed to consider the importance of praying for the communion of the Holy Ghost.

I. What can we do in learning our duty, without the communion of the Holy Ghost?

It is not difficult for men to obtain intellectual views of duty from the word of God. Most of the truths contained in the divine oracles are as readily understood by the impenitent as by Christians. There are, indeed, some leading truths, against which the hearts of impenitent men readily rise, and which they are reluctant to receive. But I do not know a single revealed truth, which, though it may have been rejected by many, has not also been received by many who were alienated from God. But while these truths *may be* correctly understood by the impenitent, as well as by the penitent, there is still room for the operation of the Holy Spirit. This

operation does not consist in revealing new truths. It is seriously doubted, whether the most eminent saints on the earth have ever known, or professed to know a single truth which is not revealed in the scriptures, and professedly understood and received by many who are in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity. And it is certain, that these eminent saints understand no truth which is not understood and unwaveringly believed by the devils. The difference, then, between the saint and the sinner does not consist in any intellectual views of the things revealed in the word of God, nor in any other manner. Do you ask, In what, then, does this difference consist? Wherein do we need the aid of the Holy Ghost? I reply, in preparing our hearts to receive it, and to be influenced by it. The preparation of the heart is from the Lord. This process of preparation is as necessary to a reception, by the heart, of the incorruptible seed, which will spring up and bear fruit unto eternal life, as cultivation is to prepare the earth for a harvest. Though with the intellect alone, men may acquire a mere knowledge of divine truth, yet if the heart be not mellowed by divine cultivation, and watered by saving grace, what will it avail? Unholy tendencies will still preserve the control. Ungodly propensities will exclude its operation from the heart. Unrighteous prejudices will shut up the windows of the soul, so that the gracious light of the gospel cannot enter. "If our gospel be hid," said the apostle, "if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them." Now, the glories of the gospel are thus obscured in the minds of all who are alienated from God, or who have even partially apostatized from the life of godliness; and hence

it is that we often hear them complain, that no portion of divine truth seems to penetrate their hearts. They read it. They intellectually learn it. But it has no purifying nor heavenly effect upon their souls. They are always learning, but never come to a saving knowledge of the truth. Is it not, then, important to pray, "The communion of the Holy Ghost be with you?"

II. What can we do in prayer, without the communion of the Holy Spirit?

Nothing is more certain, than that we need divine assistance in our supplications. There is no child of God, however mature in piety, who is not beset with infirmities. He does not know all his own wants. He does not know what he should pray for. Now, what can a poor mortal do without divine aid? Who is there, that can overcome his infirmities, and assist him to hold acceptable intercourse with God? None, of all the children of men, can reach his soul, overcome its indolence, supply it with knowledge, and raise it to the heavenly work of communion with the Almighty. To such inquiries, the scriptures only, furnish an adequate answer: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings, which cannot be uttered." This language is remarkable. *Groanings, which cannot be uttered!* A deep, silent, powerful, internal moving of the soul, to ask of God those favors which are requisite to our salvation. It gives no countenance to the boisterous and forced groanings, which are so common in modern times. The groanings of the Spirit are unutterable. They are sweet, solemn, devout movements of the soul, for the blessings which are requisite to our own sanctification, and to that of the household of faith, and for the conversion of sinners. And these move-

ments go forth in prayer—earnest, confiding, and prevailing prayer—for the blessings which are requisite to our acceptance with God! Without this heavenly assistance, all our supplications will be empty words, unprofitable to ourselves, and provoking to the Almighty. Shall we not, then, pray, "The communion of the Holy Ghost be with us?"

III. What can we do in respect to a personal reformation, without this influence?

There are few, indeed there are no members in the church, who do not need personal reformation. But while all need to be received, and to grow in grace, there are some who peculiarly need a reformation. There are individuals who in some way have departed from the living God,—who, by the neglect of private devotion, or prayer in the family, or the ordinances of public worship,—who, by cherishing resentment against individuals in the church, or against the great truths of revealed religion, or against some of the means of grace,—who, in consequence of some one or another of these things, has been spending days, and months, and years, in coldness and barrenness—who has gone with his head bowed down, and his heart overborne with anguish; and who, instead of deep repentance and thorough confession, and new application to the blood of the eternal covenant, have gone *forward* in search of God, but he is not there, and *backward*, but cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but cannot behold him: on the right hand, but he hideth himself, so that the backslider cannot see him. It is hard, O, it is hard, for any, who have thus wandered, to return. It is hard for those who have lived impiously before their associates, or their families, to come forth and say—I have wandered. It is hard for them at once to relinquish the coldness which they have all along cherished, and the

antipathies which they have felt. It is hard for them to come into the sanctuary and surrender their hearts to the full influence of divine truth. It is hard for them to go and sit down at the feet of Jesus, as little children. We often hear men desire a revival, that it may restore such to the joys of salvation. But be it forever remembered, that a revival does not make such scenes as this. It is the individual penitence—sorrow, brokenness of heart, direct returning unto God—that makes those seasons which we call a revival; and when we pray for a revival, it is no undefined, nor magical, nor blind influence that we ask, which, without repentance, shall bring cold hearts to the warmth of piety, and alienated hearts to cordiality with each other and with Christ. And how will all this apathy, and alienation from Christ, and from the best interests of souls, be overcome, except by the power of the Holy Ghost, operating, not originally, in a visible manner, but secretly and powerfully on the heart of every wanderer? Who, then, does not see the importance of praying—"The communion of the Holy Ghost be with you?"

IV. What can we do in social meetings, without the communion of the Holy Ghost?

In these assemblies it is not uncommon to hear individuals complain that others have not the Holy Ghost. Now, in regard to our own power to determine whether another, whose words, and feelings, and actions accord with the scriptures, is blessed with the communion of the Holy Spirit—in regard to our power to determine whether such an individual possesses this communion —I hesitate not to declare, that no human being can decide it.

For, 1. The gift of discerning Spirits, is one of those miraculous gifts which ceased with the apostolic age, and is thus represented in the scriptures.

2. God alone searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men.

3. Most of the instances in which uninspired individuals have confidently pronounced others to be full of the Holy Ghost, have proved to be gross mistakes, and the individuals themselves have frequently become dreadful apostates.

It is astonishing to look at facts, and see how God has stained the pride of that human glory which manifests itself in falsely pretending to know the hearts of others. While, therefore, we regard, as utterly groundless and false, all pretensions to a knowledge of the hearts of others—and while we affirm that, aside from one's fruits we can know nothing respecting the operations of the Spirit on his heart, we solemnly aver that there is important truth respecting the communion of the Holy Ghost, which it behooves all to consider, and to understand. When an individual finds his faith strong in the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, his love ardent, and his humility deep, then he has reason to believe the communion of the Holy Ghost is with him; and when he finds this to be true of him, in a religious meeting, then has he reason to believe that the communion of the Holy Ghost has been granted him. And if he does not enjoy this refreshing, then he has reason to believe that the light of God's countenance has been obscured by some sin of his own, rather than the sin of his brethren.

The grand reason why you enjoy but little of the communion of the Holy Ghost in any meeting, is because you are not personally prepared to be favored with it. Think you that Gabriel enjoys any fewer of the favors of God, because Satan is deprived of them? Think you that a genuine saint receives less of the richness of internal grace, because others exclude it? I

tell you, nay! but if ye find in yourselves a dreary vacancy in social meetings, and have no communion with God, it is not because Christians are asleep, even though they be asleep, but because your heart is not right with God. Whoever, then, is disposed to complain that the communion of the Holy Ghost is not at a meeting, confesses, by the very complaint, that he is personally excluding his blessed operations. And what can he do to insure the treasure of divine help? What can he do to obtain divine consolation? Ought he not to pray, "*The communion of the Holy Spirit be with us?*"

V. How can we assist our brethren in the way to eternal life, without the communion of the Holy Ghost?

That it is our duty to aid those who are in covenant with us, in their way towards heaven, is a truth too obvious to be denied. There are various ways of rendering this aid. One of these is by a Christian conversation. Now, if an individual have not the communion of the Holy Ghost, what will he do? What will he be likely to do? Will he not be likely to neglect conversation with his brethren in the faith? Will he not spend whole days with them, and never open his mouth respecting the concerns of religion? Or, if he speak respecting religion, will it not be concerning the politics of religion, rather than the intimacies of Christian experience? Will not his tongue be silent respecting the work of God on the soul? And will not his conversation utterly fail to enter the recesses of the inner man?

Will he not be likely to withhold, not merely his presence, but his assistance, in the work of mutual exhortation and prayer? And though he may not rush into immorality, he can hardly fail to be spiritually useless in the church.

How can he strengthen the brethren? How can he hold up the hands that hang down, and strengthen the

feeble knees, if he have no spiritual power? How can he lead his brethren to open their hearts to the Holy Spirit, while he feels none of his refreshing, reviving power? How can he have the tenderness, the sweetness, and the heavenly savor of divine grace in his intercourse with his brethren, without the communion of the Holy Ghost?

I ought here to say, that men may say much concerning religious truth, and religious people, and religious experience, without any religion. There is no difficulty in finding professors of religion, who will talk loudly against the coldness, the insincerity, and the hypocrisy of their brethren in the church. But this is not the language of the man whose heart is softened by the graces of the Spirit. It pertains to the scoffers, and the profane, and the intemperate in the streets. And there is no other sin which betrays the utter unsoundness of one's religious profession sooner, or more clearly, than a readiness to charge hypocrisy on those whose general character and conduct are in keeping with the commands of Christ. While, therefore, an individual may loudly declaim against the hypocrisy of his brethren and sisters in the church, he is only proving his own unsoundness in the profession of godliness. The fruits of the Spirit, are of a very different nature. They are full of love, peace, charity. They are useful, not in injuring, but in edifying the church. And how can we bear these fruits without the communion of the Holy Ghost?

VI. How can we perform our Christian covenants, without the communion of the Holy Ghost?

Every individual in the church has entered into the most solemn covenant with God, and with his people. Do you tremble at the thought of perjury committed in civil courts? Do you feel agitated at thus lying unto

men before the eternal God? And do you not tremble much more at the idea of breaking your covenant with Jehovah? This is not lying unto men, but unto God. I allude here not merely to an open abandonment of the covenant which we have made with God. Though it be an aggravated sin, openly to depart from the course of life which we have vowed to take; I know not that it is more aggravated, than that secret departure which, though unseen by men, is clearly known to the Almighty. He sees every deficiency of the heart, as clearly as we see those of the life. And every degree of alienation from him, must be peculiarly odious in his view. But, however odious it may be, we are constantly liable to depart from the course of life which we have vowed to take. This no one will dispute. How, then, shall we be enabled to walk in all the statutes and ordinances of the Lord, blameless? How can our hearts come into a full and constant observance of all our sacred duties, both internal and external, unless the Holy Ghost operate on our souls? Who, then, that knows all these things, will not cry for heavenly aid? Who will not lift up his supplications continually, and cry, "The communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all?"

VII. Without the communion of the Holy Ghost, how can we maintain consistency of Christian character?

When we first take the vows of God upon us, we profess to have put off the old man, and to have put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and holiness. And we are exhorted, "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him," rooted and grounded, and built up, and steadfast. And all our brethren in the Lord, know the character which we profess to have. The impenitent know it; and they will quickly mark any deviations from it. The devils know it; and they will feel emotions of malignant

joy, at every act which is not consistent with it. And we have to contend, not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers; and spiritual wickedness in high places. And we are in great danger of turning aside from our Christian course, and of bringing on ourselves, in the view of the impenitent, in the view of devils, in the view even of our brethren, of angels, and of God, the just charge of inconsistency of character. We are in danger of tarnishing our holy profession, and of fixing lasting reproach on the name of our Redeemer. Now, how can we sustain against this combination of hostile influences within and around us—how can we sustain that consistency of character which is requisite to the honor of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of our Father in heaven? How can we let our light so shine, that others, seeing our good works, shall glorify our Father in heaven? In no other way will these evils be resisted and overcome, except by the communion of the Holy Ghost.

VIII. Without the communion of the Holy Ghost, how can we be prepared for heaven?

The world above is one eternal scene of delight. This is the fruit of the love of God, of the meditation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the operations of the Holy Spirit. For the enjoyment of this glorious and everlasting scene, the saints are prepared by the communion of the Holy Ghost. Think not, that men prepare themselves for such a glorious festival of divine love as this. O no; they are prepared by the power of the Holy Spirit, sent down to carry on the process of purification within them, till they be meet for the kingdom of heaven. The apathy of their hearts must be subdued —their opposition to God overcome—their unholy propensities checked; and all their powers brought into sweet, cordial, heavenly submission to Jehovah. Their

hearts must be so softened, as to be touched and melted by the melodies of heaven. Their souls must be purified, and fitted to sympathize in all the humble emotions of gratitude, and in all the lofty ascriptions of praise. Could you in your present state be suddenly transferred to heaven, how poorly would ye be fitted to join in all the pure, elevated, affecting, sweet, and cheering employments of the world above! Are there not some of you who would regard it as a strange place? And is there not danger that you would be regarded as strangers there, as aliens, as foreigners? Is there no danger that the state of your hearts would mark you out as distinctly, and show that you had no right there, as clearly, as the dress of him who came to the marriage without the wedding garment? And if these are now the convictions of your consciences, how can you be prepared for the presence of Jehovah, without the operations of the Holy Spirit? Is there not reason to cry to God continually, "The communion of the Holy Spirit be with us?"

From the subject, I infer, that those who are favored with the communion of the Holy Spirit, will be vigorous Christians.

The grand object of the Holy Spirit in coming to our world is to glorify God, in convincing sinners, in converting them, in sanctifying the saints, and in preparing them for the heavenly world. And those with whom there is the communion of the Holy Ghost, will participate in these objects and these movements. A leading design of the work of salvation in regard to men, is to make them, in moral respects, like God. The regeneration of their souls, is designed to be an eternal banishment of that indifference, which prevails in the hearts of the impenitent respecting the honor of God. It is the implantation of a new, and a deep, and a

controlling interest in this subject; especially as it is connected with the conviction, the conversion, and the salvation of sinners. This is likeness to God. The character of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is often presented to us in this attitude. And all who are born of the Spirit, *are* in this particular, *as much as in any other*, like God. We are commanded to walk in the Spirit. But how can we walk in the Spirit, if we are going a different and a totally opposite way from that which he takes? How can we agree with him, or co-operate with him, while we are entirely indifferent to the salvation of sinners, which he is engaged in promoting? How can two walk together, unless they be agreed? Be not deceived; God is not mocked. Unless we find ourselves deeply affected and moved by those interests which the Holy Spirit is always promoting, we are none of his. He dwells not in us; and all our hopes are a delusion. How many are there of us who are thus deluded? I hope we are not all. But if these things be so, many who are now hoping for eternal life, will be disappointed! Is there not need then of crying, "The communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all?"

Nor is the danger much less in those instances in which there are sad fluctuations in respect to the great object of pursuit. Every individual in a church who turns aside from the great objects which the Holy Ghost is promoting; from the work of convincing men of their danger, and entreating them to accept a Saviour, and to grow in grace; every member of a church who thus turns aside, is not walking in the Spirit. And there is reason to fear, that his inconsistency is the result of internal impenitence. Effects may be produced on the nervous system, through the power of the imagination, which are very similar to religious experience;

and the external appearances may be in both cases nearly the same. Satan is quite willing that we should be deluded; and to secure this end, he transforms himself into an angel of light. And those have most reason to suspect themselves of being misled by him, who find no constant, living, powerful feelings in them, coinciding with the example of the Holy Spirit, and co-operating in his work. He who is one day, or month, or year, apparently alive and earnest in these things; and the next, immersed in the wealth, the pursuits, and the amusements of this world, has no real evidence that he is born of God.

Who now is there amongst us, that will not cry continually, "The communion of the Holy Ghost be with me?"

My brethren—the whole Israel of God needs immediately to pray, "Create in me a clean heart, renew a right spirit within me."

SERMON XXVII.

THE FUTURE REWARD OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD.

HEBREWS xi. 26.—"For he had respect unto the recompense of reward."

THE individual, to whom this passage relates, was Moses. With his life most of you are entirely familiar. You have read, in the early history of the Israelites, that they became subject to the Pharaohs, and that, in process of time, a king arose, who cruelly entreated the descendants of Jacob; and ordained and published a decree, that every son which was born should be cast into the river. At this period, Moses was born; and he was exceedingly beautiful; and his mother, recoiling from the thought of obeying the command of the king to cast him into the river, "hid him three months;" and when she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and pitch, and put the child therein, and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink; and his sister stood afar off, to see what would be done to him. This must have been a time of fearful interest. The fierce crocodile might approach, and seize and destroy the little victim. Other monsters might come and devour him. A cruel Egyptian might approach, and, in obedience to his king, might cast the defenceless little being into the river, to be swept away and be drowned in its waters.

At length the daughter of Pharaoh came down to the river, and her maidens walked along by the river's side. And when she saw the ark amongst the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child, and behold the babe wept; and she had

compassion on him, and she said, This is one of the Hebrew's children. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go, and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Go. And the maid went, and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." And the woman took the child, and nursed it. And the child grew. And she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses. And he was educated in all the learning of Egypt. Whether he would have ascended the throne and reigned over Egypt, does not sufficiently appear. But from his adoption into the family of Pharaoh, it is clear, that he would arrive at some high station in the government; and was destined to possess wealth and to live in luxury. Whatever his prospects were, and no one can doubt they were splendid, he regarded them not. "By faith, when he was come to years of discretion, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season—esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt."

To have produced this effect in the mind of Moses; to have moved him to abandon the wealth and the splendors of the greatest of kings, and to have led him to attach himself to a single and unimportant portion of the kingdom—to a family of poor, depressed slaves—to have excited him to undertake their deliverance, and caused him to endure the suffering incident to a journey through a barren desert, and a wandering, during forty years, about a wide and dreary wilderness—to have led him to bear all these privations, and to endure the

clamors and reproaches of the people whom he had undertaken to help—must have required some strong, some mighty inducement. It is hardly possible for us to conceive the sacrifices which he made, or the toil which he endured. Trained in all the delicacy of an imperial palace, he submitted to wander amid the severities of an uncultivated country and a scorching sun. Accustomed to all the wealth of an empire, he submitted to the poverty of a horde of slaves. Used to the gentleness and the polish of the court, he descended to become the companion of those who had been employed amongst the mortar and the kilns. And this was not the impulse of the moment, but the settled purpose of his soul. It was not an effort for an hour or a month; but for life. Now, what motive could there have been for the relinquishment of such ease, such wealth, and such splendor? What inducement was there, which could have set him to go into so much poverty, and toil, and suffering, and finally to fall a martyr to the cause in which he had enlisted?

The scriptures inform us, that he "had respect unto the recompense of reward."

This recompense could not have been expected in this life. For if it had been, then Moses was disappointed. His life was one succession of toils and trials, and he was not suffered to enter the land which God promised to give unto Israel his people. Nothing can be more certain, than that, if he expected any reward here, he was egregiously disappointed. And there is reason to believe, that he, like Abraham, had set his affections on things above; and that he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. He had looked upwards, and beheld by faith the city, which John in heavenly vision saw, where there was no sun, nor moon, nor stars, and where God

Almighty is the light thereof. He had viewed this eternal and glorious city, till his soul was inflamed with holy ardor to go thither. And when the way of duty was made perfectly clear, he entered it; and endured, as seeing him who is *invisible*, under a full persuasion that he should thus arrive at eternal rest. And this should be the course of every Christian.

I am aware, that many are afraid to open their eyes on the glorious scenes of a future state, lest they should be too much influenced by them. They seem to suspect, that there is a selfishness in the religion which dwells much on the joys of a future state, and suffers itself to be much influenced by them. But what is there in the Bible to warrant this conclusion? Where has God taught such a doctrine as this? Were it a dangerous thing to contemplate the delights of eternity, and to be influenced by them, why are we not so informed in the word of God? Why has God condescended to reveal these things, and to hold them forth before us, as the end of all our seekings and strivings on earth to do his will? The grand difficulty with the human family is, that they are not sufficiently influenced by the consideration either of heaven or of hell. They live without regard to the region beyond the grave. And hence, it is often necessary to set these things before them, and to urge them to open their eyes on the scenes of eternity. Hence it was, that the Saviour held forth before his disciples the consideration of a future world of glory, and encouraged them by it.

At one time, he informed them, that none had made sacrifices for his sake, who should not be rewarded with life everlasting.

And on another occasion, when the seventy disciples had returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name," he said unto

them, "I beheld Satan, as lightning, fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall, by any means, hurt you. Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; *but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven.*"

In the view of our Lord Jesus Christ, then, it was legitimate ground of rejoicing, that our names are written in heaven. No triumph over earthly foes, no victories over the powers of darkness, no early joy of heart, can be compared with the anticipation of going home to glory. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which are in reservation for the people of God. And in view of these things, who will not rejoice? And who will not feel, that even the highest portion of consolation and joy, which he may have on earth, is, in comparison with the delights of heaven, only *as a drop to the ocean* —as a particle of dust to the globe? In this rejoice not, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven. So much more glorious and sublime is the final condition of the Christian, than any thing which he has on earth, that these earthly acquisitions are not worthy to be mentioned as matters of rejoicing, in comparison with the eternal scene to which he is hastening. Though there is in him a well of water springing up—and flowing onward, cheering and refreshing, he will at length come to the ocean of eternal life—where, instead of the contracted fountain, there will be a boundless sea of delight; instead of the limited stream, there will be an ocean of joy. And with prospects so cheering and animating, shall we not thank God and take courage? And shall we not look forward to the end of our labors, and renew our efforts to do the will of our Father in heaven?

With this illimitable field of delight before us, and within our reach, shall we not be moved and excited to work out our salvation with fear and trembling? O, if Christians would think more often and more intensely on the great and glorious scenes, which are reserved for the people of God, we should see them setting their faces joyfully towards the kingdom of God above. We should not find them so well satisfied with what they have already attained, but pressing onwards towards the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Nothing short of actual arrival in heaven, would satisfy their aspirations.

The same feelings are produced by reading the descriptions which are given in other parts of the word of God, concerning this eternal abode of the righteous: "And there came unto me," said John, "one of the seven angels," "and talked with me," saying, "Come hither, and I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife: And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: And her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal: And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it; and the Lamb is the light thereof: And the nations of them which are saved, shall walk in the light of it: And the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there. And they

shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. And he showed me a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb: In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him."

Now, what is there within the circle of human knowledge so well calculated to move the heart, and to call forth the efforts of the children of men, as this glorious abode? What rational being can meditate on it, without finding his heart kindle, and his soul swell, with pure and holy aspirations? And are not these aspirations calculated to lead him to purify himself, even as God is pure? And is it not criminal not to be moved and affected, and pressed forward in our obedience, by such inducements as these, held forth by Jehovah himself?

But there are still other particulars in this description which call forth our attention, and which are objects of glorious anticipation and enjoyment—

The society of the holy angels.

We have been accustomed to think highly of these blessed spirits. Wherever we have heard any thing of them in our world, they have been doing good. They have been ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation. They have been deeply interested in whatever pertains to the work of redemption. And when they saw Jesus, the Saviour of men, enter our world, for the purpose of laying down

his life for sinners, their joy could no longer be repressed, and they hovered over the region where he was born, singing—"Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will to men." And is it nothing to dwell forever with these morning stars of God's empire? Is it nothing to have an eternal habitation with these elder sons of God? Is it nothing to be associated with those who have always stood around the throne of the Almighty, and always beheld his glory?

And there, too, are the spirits of just men. They differ, in some degree, from just men on earth. Here the just are not free from imperfections. There they are made perfect in glory. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when we shall appear, we shall be like him." We shall bear, in all moral respects, a resemblance, a perfect resemblance to Christ. And is it nothing to be associated with those whom Christ has purified, and brought home to glory, out of every kingdom, and nation, and tongue, under the whole heaven? Is it a trifle to be suffered to dwell in a society so glorious, so blessed, and so happy?

There, also, is Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant—Jesus, the babe of Bethlehem—Jesus, the friend of sinners—Jesus, who laid down his life, that his enemies might be saved from perdition—Jesus, who intercedes for his people—Jesus, our Redeemer. And is it nothing to behold him that hath loved us and died for us? Is it nothing to see him who was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities; on whom the chastisement of our peace was laid, and by whose stripes we are healed? Is it nothing to be favored with the opportunity of learning his character, of seeing his perfections, of beholding his glory?

And there, too, is God, the Judge of all. The term judge, in the scriptures, often means a ruler. This is

evidently the meaning in this instance. There is God, the Ruler of all—the Ruler of the world of nature. Every breeze that blows, every cloud that rises, every shower that falls, every wave that rolls, every blade of grass that grows, every leaf that hangs on the forest, every heart that beats, every star that rises or sets, is guided by him.

He is the glorious Lawgiver of the universe; and all his laws are founded in equity and truth, and are calculated to promote the highest good of every living being.

He is the Administrator of his own wise and holy laws; and in this exercise he is holy, and just, and good. His presence is life—his smile is joy. His favor dispels every cloud, and diffuses eternal peace, and joy, and triumph on all around his throne.

Now, is there not something exceedingly interesting and controlling in such prospects as these? Is there not something calculated to put into requisition every faculty and every power for its attainment? And ought not mortals to have respect unto the recompense of reward? As rational beings—as beings that can calculate in regard to the future—as beings capable of forming an estimate of the real value of objects—can we, without great foolishness, neglect to set a high estimation on the things which God has held forth as an inducement to duty? What earthly consideration can be compared with it? What earthly enjoyment is worthy to be named in competition with it? What earthly honors are there which can be compared with these? What mortal friendships are there which deserve to be mentioned in comparison with these immortal ones? What earthly princes and potentates can be compared with these unearthly and immortal beings? Who, of all the sons of men, does not go away into relative non-existence, when the majesty and the glory of the eternal Jehovah are brought clearly before the mind? And ought we not

now to set these affecting considerations before our minds—and to be influenced by them continually? Will not a becoming regard for these things change the whole course of our lives, and produce in us as distinct and as prominent marks of devotion as they once produced in him who led the Israelites out of Egypt? Why, then, do we meditate so little on these things? And why have we so little respect unto the recompense of reward? And why is not heaven, with all its grand, and majestic, and attractive, and glorious scenes, more prominently and constantly in our minds? Is not this the reason why we show so little regard, and are so apparently far from seeking a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God? O, brethren, have you a hope of going at last home to Zion? And are the great and glorious objects above, subjects of divine and earnest desire? This they will be, if you have a just estimate of them. It cannot be but your souls will be moved by them; your spirits will be drawn forth to them. You will not feel that you have a home on earth. You will regard yourselves as strangers and pilgrims here. Nothing beneath the sun will satisfy the aspirations of your souls. The thought of the society of angels—of justified men made perfect in glory—of Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant—and of God, the Ruler of all, will, through grace, have a controlling power over you, and will move you onward and upward in your career. And you will wonder why all do not see—why all are not moved—why all are not seeking, and earnestly striving to enter in at the straight gate.—Instead of wishing to see your friends enriched with the fading possessions of the earth, you will be desiring, and praying, and laboring, that they may be heirs of the kingdom of God above. Instead of being anxious to see them associated with the princes of this world,

you will be crying to God to prepare them for the society of saints and angels—of Jesus and of his Father. O, what a change would a suitable respect unto the recompense of reward produce in you? How would it transform you from cold inertness in the service of God, into *living*, *acting*, and *laborious* servants of Christ! How would this world retire from your eyes and your hearts—and how pure and powerfully attractive would be the region above! What a transformation would it produce in your whole characters! How holy, righteously, and godly would you live! What zeal, and real, living earnestness, would you have in the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ! Who now of you can think of these things without perceiving his need of a higher and holier estimation of them; and of more earnest, and constant, and fervent efforts to obtain them? Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye also look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace; and be constantly inquiring what manner of persons ye ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness.

And I wish to bring this subject home distinctly to the heart of every impenitent man, whether in the church or out of it, and to appeal to his conscience, and to ask, why it is, that ye have no respect unto the recompense of reward.

Why is it, that the eternal society of justified spirits made perfect in glory, has no moving influence upon you? Why is it, that the pure and the attractive legions of angels above, have no attractions for you? Why is it, that the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ has no allurements and no fascinations for you? Why is it, that the abodes prepared by him for his people, and the eternal possessions held in reservation for them that love him, have no attractions for you? Why is it, that the songs of redeeming love

have no melody for you? Why is it, that the golden harps, which are tuned to heavenly notes by seraphs, and angels, and saints, have no charms for you? Why is it, that the eternal God, with all his perfections, and all his glory, has no hold on your affections, and receives no praise from your lips? Is it not because you have no just views of the excellency and glory of God, and no correct appreciation of the blessedness of communion with him? And is it not owing to this, that ye have not relinquished your reliance on the things of this world, for delight and consolation? I entreat you now to stop and consider. Think of heaven—consider its glory, its delights, its eternal songs. And shall your eyes never behold it, and your hearts never enjoy it? Think of the saints above—and shall you never mingle in that blessed company? Think of the pure and holy angels—and shall you exclude yourselves forever from their society? Think of Jesus—and shall your eyes never see him as your friend? Think of Jehovah—and shall you be forever excluded by your impenitence from his gracious presence; and be compelled at last to say, The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved?

SERMON XXVIII.

THE ORIGIN OF SACRIFICES.

1 John iii. 12.—"Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."

No other individual appears in the scriptures with greater loveliness than Abel. To those whose hearts have been agitated by reading the history of the intrusion of the serpent into the garden; of his persuading Eve to eat the forbidden fruit; of her giving it to Adam, and his eating thereof; of their expulsion from the garden; and of their being sent forth to till the ground, which had been doomed to bring forth briars and thorns, till they should mingle with the dust from which they were originally taken; to those whose hearts have been agitated by the perusal of these occurrences, it is cheering to meet in the family of these poor, afflicted, and depressed sinners, such a son—a son whom the Lord Jesus Christ denominates "righteous Abel," and whose works are declared to be righteous before God. It appears like a beautiful edifice standing amidst a wide ruin. It is like a delicious garden in the midst of a widely extending desert of burning sands. When man was excluded from the garden, the light of life and salvation seemed to be nearly extinguished. It was, indeed, said to the serpent, that the seed of the woman should bruise his head. But in reading this history, who would have expected to see, in the very first generation, a plant of righteousness?

It has often been doubted, whether God revealed to

Adam and Eve the great principles of redemption. Although it is admitted by all, that he intimated that he would do something for the salvation of the human family; although his threat to the serpent, that the seed of the woman should bruise his head, is always interpreted as an intimation of relief from universal destruction; yet it has often been maintained, that Adam was left to feel his way onward to the grave and to eternity, with little more knowledge of Christ and his salvation than the beasts that perish. But it ought to be remembered, that we know but little of Adam. His whole eventful history, during nearly one thousand years, is compressed into a space which would not exceed a column in one of our weekly periodicals. And it is as impossible to believe, that Adam knew nothing except what is recorded of him, as that he performed no act except those which are described in his history. It is absurd for us to suppose, that he was not acquainted with a vastly greater circle of truths than are recorded in so short a narrative of his life.

That sacrifices, as types of the Messiah, were instituted by God in the family of Adam, is exceedingly probable. I. From the fact, that Jehovah had, at various times, revealed his will to Adam on other subjects.

He was the first of the human family. When he was formed and placed in the garden, the Lord gave him those rules which were competent to lead him to eternal life. He also gave him all those rules which were necessary to preserve life. He commanded him to subdue the earth, and to have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. He said to them, Behold, I have given you every herb, bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for

meat. He told them what food he had provided for the beasts of the field and the reptiles of the earth. He brought these animals to Adam, to see what he would call them. He told him, of what trees of the garden he might freely eat, and from what he must abstain. And when Adam and Eve had eaten the forbidden fruit, they heard the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden, and calling unto Adam, and saying, "Where art thou?" They heard his rebukes. They heard his sentence on the serpent, on the woman, and on the man. After the utterance of this fearful sentence, the Lord God did not finally abandon them, as he abandoned the angels who kept not their first estate. He made coats of skins, and clothed them. Now, is it supposable, that he who had manifested so much care for Adam previously to his fall, and who, even after his apostacy, had provided him with garments for his protection against the cold; is it probable, that he who took so much care of the perishable part of man, was regardless of his immortality? Is it probable, that he who had entered into a covenant with our Lord Jesus Christ, and had given him from amongst the children of men, a seed to serve him; is it probable, that he would conceal this fact from Adam, at the very time when every other hope had fled from his bosom? Is it possible, that he could have withheld the knowledge of him, who should be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities; on whom the chastisement of our peace was to be laid, and by whose stripes we are healed? Is it possible, that he withheld from poor, despairing Adam, the knowledge of the victim and of the sacrifice, which, in all coming times, was used by divine appointment to shadow forth the sufferings of Christ? Is it conceivable, that he failed to point him to the lamb, and to command him to shed its blood;

and to offer it as a type of the Lamb who should take away the sin of the world?

II. That sacrifices were instituted by God in the family of Adam, is probable from the circumstance, that there seems to be no natural connexion between the killing and burning of a victim, and the obtaining of pardon.

The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. The cattle on a thousand hills are his also. Unless man had been commissioned to take and to kill them, what right would he feel to enter the heritage of the Lord, and to seize and to destroy the beings to which he had given life and breath? What reason had he to believe, that he would thus secure the divine favor? What reason had he *not to believe*, that by such an act he should highly provoke God? If no permission had been given him to take the lambs from the flock, and to slay and burn them before God, had he not reason to apprehend, that his selection of a victim from the fold of the Lord would have been theft, and his slaying it an act of cruelty? and his offering of it an act of abomination? What reason had he to believe, that he should not, for such acts, receive a more fearful curse than that which was already pronounced upon him? What can be conceived, as less likely to propitiate the favor of God, than to bring a victim before him, and cruelly to slay it, and wantonly to burn it? All this must have been true, on the supposition that sacrifices were not instituted by God. A more presumptuous and unnatural expedient for securing his favor could not have been adopted! There can, then, be no ground for doubting, that God originally appointed the slaying of the lamb, as a type of Christ and of redemption by his blood. In any other way, it could not have occurred to human beings that it would be acceptable to him.

III. The offering of sacrifices, unless enjoined by God, must have appeared to the early members of the human family as a cruel and criminal transaction.

At the time of Abel, no permission had been given to the human family to eat the flesh of the animals which inhabited the face of the earth. They were suffered, indeed, to rule over them, and to subject them to their own control. But there is no evidence that they were permitted to kill them. No liberty to eat their flesh was given, till Noah came forth out of the ark. In what way, then, could the family of Adam have arrived at the conclusion, that it is right to slay them in sacrifice? What could have been more abhorrent to all the views of men, respecting those things by which God is honored, than to seize an innocent lamb, shed its blood, and burn it before him? Is it supposable, that a rite so apparently cruel, and so bloody, would have suggested itself to man as an ordinance with which God would be pleased? Is it possible, that man, who had just been condemned by God to die, could suppose that the slaying and burning of a victim would be anything else than offensive to God? Must it not have appeared highly criminal? Would not their hearts have been agitated at the thought of adding this iniquity to their former transgressions? These inquiries fully develope the fact, that nothing short of an ordinance of God could have induced them to slay and burn the victim.

IV. That there was an ordinance respecting sacrifices in the family of Adam, is evident from the fact, that the sacrifice of Abel was accepted, while that of Cain was rejected.

The scripture declares, that in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord; and Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof.

The phrase, "in process of time," hardly conveys the meaning of the original text. The words, מִקֵּץ יָמִים, in the original text, mean, "*in the end of days.*" They are unquestionably used to denote the termination of some period which God had fixed. Whether it was of a week, or of a month—whether it was the approach of the new moon, or the new year—does not sufficiently appear. But the words mark and designate a fixed and an appointed time. The passage then will read, At the appointed time, Cain brought of the fruit of the ground, an offering unto the Lord. And if there had been no law respecting the offering of a lamb, what could have been more proper? If there had been no statute requiring him to offer a specified oblation, what could have been more becoming? He had been engaged in cultivating the land. It had been pouring forth its fruits. What more appropriate for a thank-offering than specimens of the productions which the Lord God had caused to grow? As a voluntary testimonial of his gratitude, the offering of Cain, in this respect, was as valuable as that of Abel—as well calculated to express his sense of the divine favors, and unquestionably as acceptable to God; for, in this respect, "it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not."

But, as the offering of Cain was not as acceptable to God as that of Abel, it is plainly inferable, that their offerings were not a voluntary oblation. There was evidently, some law which regulated the offering which was made at this time. There was manifestly, some positive institution of God which they were required to obey. On no other account could the offering of Cain have been rejected, and the offering of Abel have been accepted. Why should Jehovah have had respect unto the act, which took a tender lamb from the flock, and

cruelly slew it, and then presented its bloody parts to him as an offering, while he rejected the collection of the clean fruits of the field, which had been gathered without pain, and without blood? On what principle, except that of a positive command, can we explain this remarkable fact? On what other principle, except that Cain refused to bring the offering which God required; while Abel literally obeyed the commands of the Most High?

This position is sustained, V. By the fact, that God in all subsequent times required of his people a victim to be slain and burned as a sin-offering.

By appointing an ordinance which was performed by so unclean and disagreeable a process as that of shedding the blood, and taking the life, God intended to make men understand the great fact, which is illustrated in the sufferings and death of Christ. He intended that all should know, that sin is an evil and bitter thing, which his soul loathes. Let it not be supposed, that either the sacrifices of Abel, Noah, Abraham, Job, or of the Aaronic priesthood, were able to take away sin. They were only a shadow of the great sacrifice, even our Lord Jesus Christ. They had no power to take away sin. They only referred the mind forward to the blood of Christ which taketh away sin. For the apostle says, that the first temple was "a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience. But Christ, being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building. Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls

and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?"—*Hebrews* ix. 9–14. These passages unequivocally show, that in all times, these sacrifices were only a figure of Christ; that as such, they were designed to refer the devout worshipper to the offering of Christ; as such, they were required of the saints in those periods of the world. And thus the argument is conclusive, that it was from the beginning an ordinance of God.

VI. This view of the subject, derives additional support from the manner in which God addressed Cain respecting his offering.

When Cain saw that his offering was not accepted, he was wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, thou art accepted. But how could Cain do well, unless there had been some rule for the regulation of his conduct in this respect? "Where there is no law, there is no transgression." And if this be so, it is also true, that where there is no law, there is no obedience. Unless there had been a law appointing and regulating sacrifices, there could have been no such thing as doing well or ill. Without a law respecting sacrifices, the whole subject was left to the freedom of man's inclination. Nor was this all. Jehovah told him, "if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." But what meaning can possibly be extracted from the expression, "*sin lieth at the door?*" According to the judgment of skilful critics, the phrase should have been translated, "a sin-offering lieth at the door." Admitting this to be a just translation of the passage, it follows, that God actually directed

Cain to offer a sin-offering. This fact, is conclusive evidence that God appointed sacrifices in the family of Adam.

VII. This view of the subject is still further sustained by the fact, that the conduct of Cain in this instance was pronounced to be evil, and his brother's righteous.

"Where there is no law, there is no transgression." The conduct of Cain could not have been evil, if there had been no law respecting sacrifice. The fact, that his course, in respect to his sacrifice, is declared by Jehovah to be sinful, incontestibly proves the existence at that time, of a law which he had violated. The same principle is applicable to Abel. His conduct is declared to be righteous. But if the offering of sacrifices was merely a human invention; if it was a matter dependent entirely on the will of men, and in no respect subject to divine regulation, the offering of Abel could not have been pronounced good, nor that of Cain evil. These terms have a certain reference to a positive enactment of God. They convey his decisions on the conduct of two individuals, acting under an ordinance which he had established. They are utterly irreconcilable with the supposition, that the offering was not required by the Almighty; and that Cain and Abel were not subject to be rewarded for their obedience, or to be punished for their disobedience. There must, then, have been a law instituted by God in the first human family, which required the sacrifice of a lamb as a type of the Lamb of God, who was to give himself a sacrifice for sin.

VIII. This view of the subject is fully confirmed by the account given of the faith of Abel.

The apostle, in Hebrews xi. 4, says, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,

by which he obtained witness that he was righteous." Now, faith in this instance refers to some declaration of the Almighty. What call was there for faith? How could faith have been put forth, unless something had been uttered by God which demanded its exercise? The scriptures declare that faith cometh by hearing. Something, then, must have been communicated by God to man, which was the object of this faith. On no other ground was there any opportunity for the exercise of faith. This faith could not have reference ultimately to the offering of the lamb, for faith in sacrifices is no where enjoined in the word of God. These were offered only as an outward means of acknowledging and strengthening faith in a Saviour to come—just as the bread and wine are now used as an outward means of recognising Christ, and as a memorial of his body, that has been broken; and of his blood, that has been shed for the remission of sin. If, then, it be asked what was the faith of Abel? we reply, it was a reliance on Christ, and his righteousness and death, for salvation. If it be still asked, what influence this had to make his deeds righteous before God? we reply, that it led him cordially to bring the offering which the Lord required. It led him to bring the "*firstlings* of his flock, and the fat thereof." The figure of "hendyades," here used, denotes that he brought the fat ones of the firstlings of his flock. The language itself, also, denotes not a single instance of sacrifice, but a habit. It is not to be supposed, that Abel, on a single occasion, offered several distinct lambs. This would imply the coming of more than one Saviour. It is to be supposed that it was his course of life, at the recurrence of every appointed time, to go to his flock and to select a lamb, and to slay, and burn it in sacrifice, as a type of the Saviour to come. Believing in Him, who should come and suffer and die for sin, his

faith led him to delight in the means by which his sufferings and death are illustrated, and to select the very sacrifice which God had established. Thus, by faith Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, —by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, *God testifying to his gifts.*

The defect in the sacrifices of Cain is now clearly apparent. He had no faith. He did not believe in a Saviour to come. To him, as to some in later times, the doctrine of Christ and him crucified, was a stumbling block and foolishness—while to Abel, it was the wisdom of God, and the power of God, unto salvation. And as he had no faith in Christ, he brought not the sacrifice which was appointed to set forth his sufferings and death. In apparent contempt of the whole doctrine of redemption, he used to appear before God with an offering of the fruits of the field. Had the design of offerings been merely the giving of thanks to God for his kind superintendence over the labors of the year, no one can doubt, that the offering of Cain was far more appropriate than that of Abel—a whole universe would pronounce it to be more appropriate. But it is forever to be remembered, that man is fallen, and ruined; that the recognition of our sin must enter into all our acts of worship; that the blood of Christ must be called in to our deliverance, and that without it there is no remission. It was a reference to this blood, that gave to the sacrifice of Abel all its value. It was a rejection of this blood that covered Cain with confusion, and called down upon him the frowns of the Almighty. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying to his gifts; and by it, he being dead yet speaketh." He proclaims to all, the necessity of relying on Christ in all their approaches to God, and of adopting the very

form of worship which he requires. This only can be acceptable to him. This will call forth his approbation; and secure eternal life. THUS ABEL, THOUGH DEAD, YET SPEAKETH.

The character of Abel, in explicitly obeying God, ought to be duly considered by every young man.

The good, which Abel accomplished in his short life, was vast.

The death of the youthful Abel, though trying, is very much to be preferred to that of the disobedient.

The condition of Abel in eternity is exceedingly honorable.

He was the first of this world admitted to the world above—hastened thither by the hand of his own brother —the head of the whole army of martyrs for the testimony of Christ and of his redemption.

SERMON XXIX.

HISTORY OF CAIN.

JOHN iii. 12.—"Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother."

You will remember, that I have recently shown the divine origin of sacrifices, as types of the Messiah, in the family of Adam. I have also shown that the faith of Abel in a Saviour to come, led him to go to his flock and sacrifice a lamb, in anticipation of the coming of Christ, and as an indication of faith in his righteousness and death. To this sacrifice, and to Abel, who offered it, God had respect, and by it he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying to his gifts; and thus, he being dead yet speaketh. But another individual attended at the family altar of Adam. He was the first born of the human race. He was the individual of whom the mother of all living said to her husband, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." Being not merely the first born of Adam, but of all living, we should suppose that he would have felt it peculiarly important to set a holy example before all that should come after him. Hearing often from his depressed parents the story of their sin in the garden, and of their expulsion from it, and of their being doomed to die; one would suppose that he would have been inclined to walk in the fear and love of God, and in a careful observance of all his ordinances. But instead of this, he formed a very different character.

The grand defect in the character of Cain was, that he had no faith in a Saviour to come. Unlike Abel, he

did not look forward to him who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; on whom the chastisement of our peace was laid, and by whose stripes we are healed. He did not rely on him for wisdom, righteousness, justification, sanctification, and redemption. He did not believe the report of his coming, nor was the arm of the Lord revealed to him. By him, as by thousands of others, the Saviour was despised and rejected.

As he had no faith in Christ, so he also refused to bring the offering which, from the early times of the apostacy, was established, and required to be presented, in anticipation of the coming and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. At the arrival of the period appointed by God, he came, not bringing a lamb for a burnt-offering to the Lord, but merely the fruits of the earth. With what feelings must Adam, who, like Abraham, Job, and other patriarchs, must have been the high priest of the family—with what feelings must Adam have looked on this act of disobedience! With what agitation must Eve, who had felt the bitterness of listening to the serpent, have beheld her son subjected to the dominion of the wicked one, and flagrantly sinning against God, even in those circumstances where he ought to have been propitiating his favor! What new judgment did she expect to see breaking in upon her family! What peals of thunder did she expect to hear, when the Lord should next be heard coming to call them to account for this violation of his institution in their family worship!

But the sacred season itself did not pass without testimonials of God's approbation of the sacrifice of Abel, and his disapprobation of that of Cain; for "The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering, but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect." What the nature

of this testimonial was, *it is not easy to declare.* There have been instances in which miraculous manifestations of divine approbation were given to those who feared God, and wrought righteousness.

When Abraham had prepared a sacrifice, according to the command of God, "It came to pass, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed between those pieces," into which the sacrifice had been divided.—*Genesis* xv. 17.

When Gideon prepared a kid and unleavened cakes, and put them, as he was commanded, upon a rock; "Then the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes.—*Judges* vi. 21.

When Elijah, after being hidden at the brook Cherith, was sent to show himself unto Ahab, he brought all the prophets of Israel to Mount Carmel, and said unto the people, "Let them give us two bullocks, and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under; and call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." And when this had been done, "*Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.* And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces, and said, "*The* LORD, *he is the God; the* LORD, *he is the God.*"

Now, it is not improbable that, in the course of their sacrifices from year to year, Cain came to put forth pre-

tensions that his offerings, which were in open violation of the law of God, were as acceptable to God as those which he had enjoined. It is not improbable that on a single occasion, the fire of God descended from heaven and consumed the sacrifice of Abel, *while that of Cain, like the offering of the priests of Baal,* was left untouched. In this view of the transaction, there was a most wonderful manifestation of respect for the sacrifice of Abel, and a most solemn mark of censure upon that of Cain.

Here, it was reasonable to suppose that Cain would have been humble. Like the sons of Israel, in later times, one would suppose that he would have fallen on his face, and said—Christ is the Mediator, and the sacrifice is the proper type of his sufferings and death. What else ought he to have done? What else could a reasonable being do? When Jehovah had risen up and declared his will respecting the mode of his worship, and the manner in which the sufferings and death of Christ should be illustrated—what inducement could he have to persevere in his stubbornness? What call did the necessities of his spiritual condition make for any thing else than repentance and contrition? This was his duty—in this he ought to have been immediately employed. In his reception of the divine censures, there were manifest tokens of a reigning depravity—of a fearful internal corruption. "Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell." "And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, (a sacrifice) sin lieth at the door. And his desire shall be unto thee, and thou shalt rule over him."

The tender mercies of the Lord are over all his works. Instead of immediately chastising Cain for withholding from him the appropriate sacrifice—instead

of returning his indignation with a corresponding indignation, he mercifully told him, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" If thou dost perfectly obey God, thou art accepted on the ground of thine own righteousness; but if thou dost not perfectly obey, a sacrifice is the only way of reconciliation to God.—Abel has adopted this way. *In this way you must come, or be lost forever.*

Instead, now, of repenting, and returning unto God, his indignation seemed to be excited against his brother. Here is a wonderful fulfilment of the threat of God respecting the seed of the woman and of the serpent. Are you surprised at the declaration, that Cain, the first born man, was of the seed of the serpent? Do you suppose that the declaration has respect unto the reptiles of the earth? If this were its meaning, then would all the sons of ungodliness have occasion to lift up their voices in one note of triumph! But such an idea is utterly incompatible with the scriptures. John declares Cain to be "*Of that wicked one, and slew his brother.*" With manifest reference to this fact, our Saviour told the Jews—"Ye are of your father the devil, and his deeds ye will do; he was a murderer from the beginning." Nothing is more apparent than that there is hostility between those who really fear God, and keep his commandments, and those who refuse to walk in his statutes, and to do his will. This hostility is no new thing in our world; it found its way into the first assembly for public worship in our fallen world, and has been an active agent in resisting the progress of godliness until this day. In the case of Cain, it manifested itself in a manner so fearful, as to make both the ears of him who hears it to tingle. He did not proceed to the fearful act in the presence of the worshippers. He "talked with Abel his brother;" and no indication seems to have

been given, that he intended to take away his life. But when they had gone from the family altar—"And it came to pass, when they were in the fields, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him."

It has been sometimes urged, as a possible mitigation of the guilt and malignity of Cain, that he could not have known the effect of his attack on Abel; that as no human being had then died, it was impossible for him to know, with certainty, that death would follow, and that Abel would lie before him a cold, lifeless, motionless mass of corruption. But this is very improbable. They had lived long enough in this world to know the course of nature. They had probably seen animals die —they had seen them slain in sacrifice. They knew that blows, or wounds, would take away human life. That Cain intended to kill his brother is evident, from the circumstance of his failing to plead before God, that he did not expect to take away his life; and from the entire silence of the scriptures respecting such a mitigation of his crime. The death of Abel was a deliberate murder,—thus it is everywhere treated in the scriptures.

This awful deed did not escape the divine notice. The Lord, who watches over his people, and sees all their sorrows, their struggles, and their death, called unto Cain, and inquired, "Where is Abel thy brother?" Agitated as he must have been, one would suppose that the truth would have broke forth from his trembling lips. But not even the voice of the Almighty, nor the agitation of his mind, could bring him to acknowledge his sin. O, how fearfully hardened must the heart be, which can meditate the murder of a member of the human race! All regard for God, for man, and for truth, has departed. Listen to his reply, and from it learn the history of every murderer. When the Lord God inquired

—"Where is Abel thy brother?" he replied, "I know not—am I my brother's keeper?" O, how fearfully hardened, thus to reply to the Almighty!—to him who searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins of the children of men! Yet this is the condition to which the heart of a murderer is ordinarily brought by his transgression!

But Jehovah did not stop here. He demanded—"*What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.*" This circumstance, as well as the pretence of Cain that he knew not where he was, leads us to suppose that, like all other murderers, he had concealed his brother's body. This, however, was of no avail, to conceal the guilty deed. The blood of the murdered man assumes all the characteristics of the victim. It rises up before God, stands erect, and cries, with a note so loud and plaintive as to disturb all heaven, and rouse the divine vengeance against the transgressor.

Jehovah rises and declares, "Now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."

By this act God separated Cain from the other members of the human family, and doomed him to perpetual vagrancy. No more was he suffered to dwell with his father and mother. No longer to hear their expostulations, or to receive their advice, or to mingle in their joys, or to share their sympathies.

This was the time for him to have thought of his poor brother; to have called to mind his godliness; to have recollected his dying struggles, and his cold and stiffning members; and deeply to have repented of his iniquity. But this is not the way of the murderer.

He thinks only of himself. He complains only of the hardness of his own fate. "Cain said unto the Lord, my punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold thou hast driven me out from the face of the land." From these fields which I have tilled, I shall now be excluded. "From thy face shall I be hid." No more shall I have opportunity to attend the worship of the family of Adam; to join in their prayers, their sacrifices, or their thanksgivings. "I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth." I shall never enjoy the sweets of human society. "And it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me."

Here the conscience of Cain indicated the punishment which his crime deserved. This had not at this time been revealed by God as the appropriate reward of a murderer. Nor did he derive this opinion from the usages of mankind, as this was the first murder. It was the spontaneous voice of conscience, pronouncing her judgment on his conduct, and her sentence on his life.

But the Lord had determined to preserve the life of Cain. Whether it was owing to the small number of the human family at that time, or to a purpose of illustrating before men and angels, the immediate and ultimate effect of preserving the life of a murderer, does not sufficently appear. He declared to the guilty man, "Whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him seven-fold." His curse shall be seven times more severe than that pronounced against Cain. "And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him." The original language, here translated "*a mark*," equally means *a sign*. Thus it is translated in every other part of the scriptures. I am inclined to think, that this is its meaning in this place, and that the Lord, who had refused to set his seal of

approbation to the offering of Cain, now gave him a *miraculous sign*, that the dreadful curse which God had pronounced against him should be fulfilled; and that no human being should hinder its accomplishment; that he should live a *fugitive* and a *vagabond* in the earth, and no one should lay his hand on him to slay him.

Being thus accursed of God, and in his own view exposed to the keen disapprobation of men, "Cain went out from the presence of the Lord." He went away from the place where the family of Adam met to worship God; where they offered their victims before him, and where God himself was wont to commune with them, and to send them answers of peace. He went out from the places where God had met him, and rebuked him for the murder of his brother, and had pronounced a fearful curse upon him; "and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden."

It has often been asked with an air of triumph by the whole company of infidels, *Where was this land of Nod?*—who inhabited it? And does not the fact, that Cain found inhabitants there, and a wife—does not this fact incontestibly prove that there were other inhabitants besides the family of Adam? To this I reply, that all these facts could be easily reconciled with the scriptures. What impossibility could there be in the case? Adam and Eve had lived nearly one hundred and thirty years; and might have had many other children; and these again might have had numerous children, and settled vast tracts of country. But this is not our view of the case. The term *Nod*, signifies *vagrancy;* and the phrase, "*land of Nod*," means *land of vagrancy*. It is used to denote the section of country in which Cain roamed after his departure from the house of his father, till he built a city. This name was probably given to the country by subsequent genera-

tions, in memory of the wanderings of Cain there, previously to his building the city. His wife must have been a daughter of Adam and Eve. Whether she became his wife previously to the murder of Abel, does not appear. Probably it was after that event; and like many in our times, she believed him to be innocent of the crime; or, that he could easily be reformed if he were guilty.

Here he seems to have flourished. But there is no evidence of the fear of God in his heart. Here a son was born unto him. Here he builded a city, which he called Enoch, after the name of his son Enoch. It is not probable, that this city was commenced till his descendants had become numerous. He may have been a wanderer five or six hundred years previously to his undertaking this vast work. And his descendants may have increased to the number of several thousands. It is remarkable, that he did not call the city after his own name. Was he sensible that it would be a reproach to all his descendants? Did he fear that it would too closely identify his own name, and crimes, with the history of his posterity—and transfer to them all the loathsomeness of his own character? Is there not something appalling to a murderer in the perpetuation of his own name? And is not the scripture affectingly true, which saith, "the name of the wicked shall rot?" Their reputation is like a dead, a decaying, and loathsome body; so loathsome, that they dread to have it descend to their heirs.

In this city, the descendants of Cain seem to have lived in open disregard of the Almighty. Wickedness abounded amongst them. Here, the law of marriage was violated; and Lamech, not satisfied with the original institution of God, took two wives. Here, murder seems to have been committed with impunity. Here,

also, the arts seem to have flourished. Here, Jubal invented the harp and the organ. Here, Tubal-Cain held his school for teaching artificers in "brass and iron." Here poetry was cultivated. The most ancient verses now known, were prepared by Lamech:

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
Ye wives of Lamech hearken unto my speech;
For I have slain a man to my wounding,
And a young man to my hurt.
If Cain shall be avenged seven-fold,
Truly Lamech seventy and seven."

But while the arts of life were advancing, and on every side they could boast of modern improvements, wickedness also abounded. The infidel principles which reigned in Cain, seem to have descended to his posterity. The same ungodliness which inhabited his bosom, descended to them. Amongst his descendants there were giants, [robbers,] and unto them were born children. And it came to pass, when "the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, they took them wives of all that they chose; and their children also "became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown," אנשי שם, men of distinction for deeds of iniquity, for plunder and murder.

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth." The principles and practices of Cain, like a little leaven, had leavened the whole lump; and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. "And it repented the Lord that he had made man upon the earth, and it grieved him at the heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them."

After this fearful catastrophe, which evidently resulted from the infidel principles of Cain, the Lord, with appa-

rently distinct reference to this fact, declared it to be his will, that every murderer should be put to death. Genesis ix. 5, 6: "And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."

This statute, originally given in the time of Noah, was repeated hundreds of years afterwards to the children of Israel. Whilst cities of refuge were provided for those who unintentionally killed a man, every murderer was required to be put to death. Nor has this law been repealed. Until this day, it is a statute of God's empire, "WHOSO SHEDDETH MAN'S BLOOD, BY MAN SHALL HIS BLOOD BE SHED."

"One sinner destroyeth much good." Cain interrupted the worship of God; killed his brother; founded an empire of infidels; drowned the world.

Since that time, God does not permit a murderer to live.

SERMON XXX.

THE SHORTNESS OF LIFE.

GENESIS xlvii. 8, 9.—"And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou? And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers, in the days of their pilgrimage."

YOU all know the history of Jacob. You have all read, that of his twelve sons, one was hated by his brethren, and was sold into Egypt. Here he rose, from his humble condition, to be the prime minister of the nation, and lord over all the country. Being warned of God respecting the approach of an oppressive famine, he gathered sufficient provision, during seven years of plenty, to sustain, not only the Egyptians, but all the foreigners who went thither for provisions, during the seven succeeding years of famine. At length, the brethren of Joseph were compelled, by the prevailing distress, to go down into Egypt to purchase food, to sustain their families, of him whom they once sold. The aged Jacob thus came to learn, that Joseph, whom he supposed an evil beast had devoured, was alive. And he said, "It is enough; Joseph, my son, is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die." Then leaving, for the last time, the land of his fathers, and the graves of his wives, he went down into Egypt, there to see his son, and there to die. On his arrival, after affectionately saluting his father, Joseph introduced him to the king; in reply to whose inquiries respecting his age, he uttered the memorable passage, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have

the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers, in the days of their pilgrimage."

It is astonishing to us, to hear an individual, who had arrived at one hundred and thirty years, declare, that the days of his years had been few and evil. But in this respect, the declaration of the patriarch does not differ from that of those aged individuals in our times, who have outlived all, or nearly all of those who began their mortal existence with them. Do any doubt this assertion? Let them go, then, to one whose head is hoary with age; whose limbs have almost forgotten how to perform their office; whose eyes, though dim, can see, and yet can see none of their early friends and kindred. Let them ask him, whether he seems to himself to have lived long in this world; and he will tell them, that his days have been few, and that his time has been short. As the result of all the inquiries of this nature, which I have made, I have found but one aged individual in this world, who told me that his life seemed to have been long. Every other mortal, with whom I have ever spoken, however great his age may have been, has declared his days to have been few, and his life short.

This, then, is the doctrine, alike of the Bible and of human experience. In speaking of the length of human life, we always speak comparatively. In comparison with the lives of many classes of irrational animals, human life is long. As a race of beings, our mortal existence is longer than that of any of the domestic animals, or of the numerous classes of living and moving existences by which we are surrounded. Of these, some begin their lives, exist for a day, or a few days, and then disappear forever. Others live a single season, and then are seen no more. The most hardy of the

domestic animals soon decay and die. Even of these, the ordinary life of man outmeasures several generations.

But while, in comparison with the lower orders of creation, our mortal existence may be long, it is short in every other respect.

I. It is short in comparison with the lives of the early members of the human family. Before the Deluge, almost every individual, of whom we know anything, lived nearly one thousand years.

Adam, the first of our race, lived nine hundred and thirty years.

Seth lived nine hundred and twenty years.

Cainan lived nine hundred and ten years.

Methuselah lived nine hundred sixty-and-nine years.

Noah, partly before the flood, and partly after it, lived nine hundred and fifty years.

Shem, the son of Noah, lived about six hundred years.

Peleg, the fourth from Noah, lived two hundred and nine years.

Terah, the father of Abraham, died at the age of two hundred and five.

Abraham, one hundred and seventy-five.

Isaac, one hundred and eighty.

Jacob, one hundred and forty-seven.

Look back, now, through this list of the principal members of the human family, and you will see how the period allotted to man, to dwell on the face of the earth, was constantly diminishing. Nor did this process of diminution stop here. Joseph, the son of Jacob, died at the age of one hundred and ten years. In the period, after the children of Israel had gained possession of Canaan, Moses said, "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength, they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor, and

sorrow: for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." In our age, there are few who attain to the life of the Israelites, in the period of the prophet who so affectingly bewailed its shortness. The records of death testify, that most of our generation die in childhood and youth. The monuments of our burial places declare, that only here and there an individual arrives at threescore and ten years. Life is a vapor, that soon vanisheth away. It is an isthmus, already washed and wasted by the flow of time, till its opposite waters almost meet. We scarcely tread upon one of its banks, before we arrive at the other. Thirty years hence, almost every individual, of those who are now in natural life, will have closed his mortal existence. The houses, which you now inhabit, will be inhabited by others. The lands, which you now cultivate, will be tilled by others. The seats, which you now fill, will be occupied by others. The vacant graves in the burial place will be your abode. Instead of meeting with the living, you will belong to the great congregation of the dead. Nor ought this statement to be deemed applicable only to those in middle life. Within thirty years, not only these, but almost all who have not yet arrived at the meridian of life, will be here no more. If a few shall survive, where can they find those who are here to-day? Ah, they will be compelled to go to the field of graves, and there, amidst those already mouldering to dust, they will find the only memorials of us.

II. Human life is short, in comparison with our expectations of its continuance.

Though we are often admonished of the shortness of life, and especially of the uncertainty of our earthly existence; though the inroads of death on those both older and younger than ourselves, and the repeated assertions of the scriptures, assure us, that our hold on

life is frail, and liable at every successive moment to be broken; yet there is in our hearts a persuasion, that the time of our continuance here will not soon close. In childhood, the scenes of future life open before our eyes. They attract our attention. They call forth our desires. They hold forth to our view innumerable delights. So great is our anxiety to mingle in its enjoyments, that the intervening period seems almost interminable. And yet from this abundance of time, we are scarcely able to steal a moment to consider our condition, to meditate on the character of Jehovah, to become reconciled to God, or even to fix it as a practical principle in our minds, that any day, or any moment of that future course may be our last. If we arrive at the vigor of youth, we look forward to the scenes of manhood. A succession of objects, each in its turn, attracts our attention. We pant for the arrival of the day when we shall possess them. So strong is our desire to mingle in these future scenes, that were it in our power, we should blot out of our very existence the period which must intervene before their attainment. And while thus longing for future possessions and enjoyments, death comes, and bids us to turn our eyes away from the future scenes of life, and close them, till the morning of eternity. Or if we be permitted to live till old age, our days are full of anticipation. One object is presented to our view, and the time before its attainment seems long. Another object is presented, and moments hang heavily till its arrival. The wheels of the chariot of time roll slowly, and our very souls are restless for a more rapid movement. At last, it reaches the goal, and man's hour is up. Standing on the brink of the grave, he looks back upon this life, and how short does it appear! He feels that all his time here is only an hand's breadth. It seems like a dream. Now, he wonders

how he could ever have regarded threescore and ten years as an almost interminable period. Such are the feelings of those who die in a "good old age." What, then, must be their views of life, who are cut off in the midst of their days? How must the youth, who is called into eternity, regard the few years which are allotted to him on the earth? What must the tender child, who, on his passage from childhood to youth, meets the fatal dart, think of this life? It is the testimony of all, at whatever age they go down to the grave, that their days are few. From the whole region of the borders of death the cry is heard, Life is a shadow, which soon vanisheth away.

III. Human life is short, in comparison with eternity.

There can, in strict language, be no comparison between that which is finite, and that which is infinite. The failure, however, to establish the comparison, itself may aid our minds to form suitable conceptions of the brevity of human life. When we compare our existence on the earth with that of the early members of the human family, it seems to be exceedingly short. When compared with the time in which the world has existed, our lives are exceedingly limited. If measured by the time which must intervene between the foundation of the world, and that day when the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and the elements melt with fervent heat, the period of mortal life seems to be almost annihilated. But how is it lost when brought into comparison with that eternal duration, upon which we are about to enter! Our lives in this world can easily be measured. Our hours can be estimated by the movement of a few grains of sand. Not so with eternity. Were every grain of sand in the universe to be the name of a million of years, it could not measure eternity. Even the whole amount is not a

moment, in comparison with the future existence to which we tend. What, then, O, what are the few years, and days, and hours, that we spend on the earth! How affectingly short is our existence beneath the sun!

IV. Human life is short, in comparison with the weighty interests which are affected, and unalterably settled by it.

These interests comprehend all that is dear to our souls, and precious in our existence, when the heavens and the earth shall be no more. In this short period, it is immensely important to learn our true condition—to understand our alienation from God—to appreciate the excellence of the divine law—to know the way of justification through our Lord Jesus Christ—and to become reconciled to God. In comparison with the shortness of our mortal existence, the work of our salvation is immense. In this work we must learn the law of the Lord our God; its nature, its illimitable extent, and its spirituality. In the light of this holy instrument, we must discern our transgressions; not merely those which are open and flagrant, but also those which are concealed from our neighbors; and even previously to this application of the statutes of the Almighty, unperceived by ourselves. We must arrive at the knowledge of our deep and reigning depravity, in all its loathsomeness to our consciences and to Jehovah. We must understand our repeated, our constant departure from the requisitions of a holy God, both in respect to himself and to those by whom we are surrounded. We must learn the character of Jehovah, especially in its relation to ourselves—the character and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Lamb slain for the sin of the world—the character and work of the Holy Ghost, especially as the author of regeneration and sanctification. We must learn the way through this world to the city

of our God above. We must acquire the knowledge of those high and commanding motives, which are designed by God, through grace, to excite us to use all diligence to make our calling and election sure. It is not required that every individual should arrive at a complete speculative knowledge of what the scriptures teach on these great truths. But no one can expect to attain salvation, without that degree of acquaintance with them which is necessary to a discrimination between the way of life and the way to death. Nor is knowledge the only thing to be acquired in this short period. However great our acquaintance with divine truth—however clear our views of God and duty, yet if we fail practically to do the will of our Father in heaven, the weighty interests of our souls will be forever forfeited. In addition, then, to learning the way to heaven, we must walk in it. We must do all the works which the Lord our God requires of us; we must repent; we must believe on the Son of God; we must love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and our neighbor as ourselves; we must honor God with our bodies and our spirits, which are his; we must put forth untiring efforts for the salvation of all by whom we are surrounded. God has assigned unto every man his appropriate work. This he must perform, or he can never be admitted to the kingdom of heaven. This work is great—it demands effort. Think not that a few indefinite feelings, and irresolute endeavors, will, in so short a time as is allotted to man below, bring you to glory. Strive to enter in at the straight gate; for many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able. What an immensity of care and of toil are requisite, during every period of our short existence, to be prepared for the eternity to which we hasten! What weighty, what overwhelming interests are compressed into this momentary existence! Where is the human

being, that may not justly tremble at the influence of every moment of his existence here, on his eternity! Where is the son of Adam, who ought not to be agitated at the thought that in the present, fleeting period of his existence, are concentrated interests as extensive as duration itself? O, brethren, were our eyes fairly open to the circumstances of our mortal existence, in their relation to futurity, how should we be agitated, lest our momentary existence in this world close before our interests for eternity be secured!

V. Human life is not only short, but altogether unsatisfactory.

It may seem to indicate some want of a due submission to Jehovah, not to be satisfied with the circumstances in which we are placed. But while every human being ought to be thankful for the mercies which he receives—while he has reason to be grateful that he is not weeping, and wailing, and gnashing his teeth—it ought not to be forgotten, that this world was never designed for the permanent abode of immortal beings. Its beauty, its splendor, and its very form, are destined to pass away. There will be a time when, from eternity, we may look back and endeavor to descry the planet in which we were born, our characters formed, and our destinies decided; but it will then have ceased to exist. And would it not be strange, if beings destined to be removed from this to another scene of existence, should be found to be entirely satisfied with the world, the circumstances and the employments which they are soon to leave! The saying—"There is nothing satisfying here," so often repeated as hardly to be deemed worthy of notice, is full of meaning; nor is its meaning restricted to those who are without God, and without hope in the world. Jacob, the venerable patriarch, said—"Few and evil have the days of the years of my pilgrimage been."

Nor was this true merely of the early saints. "Nor only they," said the apostle, "but ourselves, which have the first fruits of the Spirit," who are the first under the gospel dispensation, "even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies." "For we are saved by hope;" but that which is enjoyed, cannot be an object of hope, "for that which a man hath, why doth he yet hope for?" This earthly residence, with whatever that is convenient or pleasurable it may possess, can never be regarded as home, by a soul destined to immortality. There is no place in the universe, except the building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, where it will be content to dwell. In every other abode it will be unquiet. No other place furnishes those rich materials of thought, those glorious objects of affection, which its capacities imperatively demand. Here only will it hunger no more, and thirst no more. Here alone can it eat the fruit of the tree, and drink the water of the river of life, and be filled with all the fulness of God.

The shortness of life is a consoling reflection to the Christian.

In this world he is subject to disappointment. His possessions may be suddenly destroyed. His friends may be alienated from him, or they may be called to go down into the house appointed for all the living. His parents, his brothers, his sisters, or his children, may be taken away. Instead of meeting them, and pouring upon them the full flow of his affections, he may be called to follow their cold bodies to the grave, and to pour out his tears at their tomb. The corruptions, too, of his own heart, often fill him with anxiety and sorrow. He is frequently compelled to say—"O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Clouds intervene between him and his Maker,

and exclude the light of his countenance. He sometimes walks in darkness, and sees no light. He sometimes goes with his head bowed down, and his heart overwhelmed with anguish. To him especially, when he trusts in the Lord, and stays himself upon his God, the thought of the shortness of life must bring home the most cheering prospects. Death is but a door into that world where every relation will be perpetual—where sin can no longer interrupt his enjoyment—where pain and sorrow shall cease—where no cloud shall ever obscure the light of God's countenance. Disciples of Jesus! the time is near. A few more seasons of sorrow—a few more pains—a few more tears—a few more battles fought with the adversary of your souls, and with your own internal corruptions—a few more victories won—and you shall go to mansions of eternal rest. Consider now the shortness of the contest, and let all your powers be awakened to earnest and persevering effort; and, whilst you gather consolation from the fact, that you shall remain in this world but a little longer, let your lives show the tendency of your hearts. Let them show that you seek a "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

The shortness of life should admonish those who are impenitent, immediately to enter on the work of their salvation.

You are constantly interrupted in your enjoyments, by the fear of death, and of the retributions of eternity. Whenever you mingle in joyful associations with your companions, the thought that they, who now minister to your gratification, may soon be called to bear you to the house appointed for all the living, may intrude upon the mind and turn all its joyousness into sorrow. Whenever you walk abroad in silence and solitude, the falling leaf, the decaying flower, the withering tree,

may awaken painful anticipations of your own dissolution. Whenever you enter the abodes of men, the remembrance of their former inhabitants may remind you, that the time is near when you must stand before the Judge of all the earth, give your account, and hear his righteous decision. These thoughts ought to admonish you immediately to devote yourselves to God. You have only a momentary existence here. Your days, at best, are few and evil. Why will you embitter them with the recollection of obligations violated, of opportunities misimproved, and of a God offended? Why compel yourselves to look forward to death with fearful anticipations? Why look beyond the grave to an eternity of wo as your portion? Is it not better to turn to God, and thus avoid all this bitterness? Why, then, do you delay? Are the trials of a life of godliness so great as to deter you from entering upon it? The life of a Christian has indeed its trials, but in his sufferings he has his solace —there is in his bosom a hope of deliverance. Of this he sometimes has a cheering foretaste; and he looks forward to the hour of his departure from life, with the hope that all his afflictions, and all his sorrows, will cease. But no hope of deliverance diminishes your trials—no expectation of future blessedness mitigates your sorrows. Every sinful enjoyment is followed by remorse. Your way is hard. You are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest; and yet this unhappy existence is only the beginning of sorrows. Why, then, will you so spend this particle of existence, as to lose the delights and incur the sorrows of eternity? Why not turn at once to the Lord? Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation; to-day, while ye are hearing his voice, harden not your hearts. With you, to-morrow may be the beginning of eternity. O, that ye were

wise—that ye would consider this—that ye would think on your latter end!

To those who have to-day followed an aged parent to the grave, the shortness of human life must be an affecting consideration,—you can distinctly remember when you dwelt under his kind protection, and were nourished by his care. It seems but yesterday, when you left the paternal abode, and went forth to your own habitations; and though the time seem so short, yet what a portion of your lives has gone! How near to the ordinary close of life have you come! What a multitude of vicissitudes have occurred in your history! How often has death visited, and borne to the grave, the members of your circle! And now your aged father, having buried, in the land of your nativity, the companion of his youth, comes to relieve his loneliness amongst the memorials of her who bare them. Here disease found him enjoying the society of his children—here death overtook him—here he is laid in the grave. And while you remember the kindness and the constancy with which he watched over your childhood, and directed your youth, do not forget, that no generation now intervenes between you and the grave. There is now no father, no mother, who seems to stand between you and the destroyer. The way is unobstructed for him to approach and demand your souls. Standing as ye do, and knowing that of all the generations, from Adam to yourselves, not an individual survives, and that you are now in the rank next to the grave, how affecting must be your thoughts!—how moving your reflections! With what earnestness ought you now to gird yourselves for the conflict with whatever may hinder your preparation for the kingdom of heaven! Seeing, then, that ye, and your companions in life look for such things, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation

and godliness? What diligence ought you to use, that you may be found of him in peace? Nor let the grandchildren feel that this admonition is limited to their parents. No; it is sent to you as well as to them. The voice said Cry—and I said, What shall I cry? "*All flesh;*"—not merely parents—"all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof, as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth," when a strong wind bloweth upon it. "Surely the people is grass." Though young, your time is short—your days few—your opportunities precious—your day of final account near. "Be ye also ready," "for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh."

In view of our own insensibility of the shortness of life, who will not pray—"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom?"

And seeing that life is so soon to terminate, and all these things to be dissolved, What manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness? Ye aged—ye who are in the meridian of life—ye who are in youth and in childhood—what ought you to be?

"O, satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days."

SERMON XXXI.

HISTORY OF NOAH.

GENESIS vi. 22.—"Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he."

THE period in which Noah lived, was one of the most interesting which has occurred in the history of man. Of his ancestors, only two from the creation of the world had given up the ghost. At the birth of Noah, Adam had been dead but one hundred and twenty-six years, and Seth his son, only fourteen years. Lamech, the father of Noah, had lived on the earth more than fifty years before the death of Adam. In a direct line back towards the first man, but one of the seven generations which preceded him, had died. The line of his ancestry had indeed been broken, but not by death. One individual had walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. All the rest were alive. He lived amongst men who had seen the head of Adam growing hoary through more than three hundred years, and who had probably borne his cold body to the grave. His early days were spent amongst matrons of the human family, who had undoubtedly heard from Eve, the painful story of the serpent, and his persuasions; of their exclusion from paradise, and of their mournfully going forth from the garden to till the ground, and of the sorrow with which, after being accustomed to the delicious fruits of Eden, she prepared her first repast of the herbs of the field; of her sympathy with her poor husband, in seeing the thorns and the thistles shoot forth over the face of the ground; and knowing that he

was doomed by the sweat of his brow to eat his bread, till he return unto the ground from which he was taken; for God had said, "Out of it wast thou taken." "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." All his ancestors could then distinctly remember the forms of the aged two, who were the parents of all the living; and could relate all the prominent particulars of their lives, and of their death. Born amongst those who had lived from one hundred to nearly one thousand years, and having opportunity to be acquainted with individuals back to the very cradle of the human race, he was destined to live, till not a man of all the descendants of Adam at the time of his birth, nor a single individual of their sons, should survive. As he looked back, he could almost see the origin of the human family; and as he looked forward, he could see the end of the vast crowd which must then have dwelt on the earth.

For a long time previous to the birth of Noah, the children of men had been advancing to maturity in wickedness. The bold violation of the laws of God, which was now rapidly hastening to its result, probably had its origin in the family of Cain. Judging from what is now known of the ordinances of God, it is indisputable, that he had instituted sacrifices in the family of Adam, and appointed the lamb to be offered as a type of Christ. Hence, through faith, Abel brought a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts. What else can here be implied, than that through the lamb as a victim, he looked forward to the Lamb slain for the sin of the world? But Cain seems to have believed himself competent to devise the modes of divine worship. He seems to have felt able to think for himself, and to decide that one thing is as good as another in the service of God, if it be offered with a sincere

mind. And hence, when Abel came with the symbol of the Saviour to come, Cain came bringing the fruit of the ground; and to his offering the Lord had not respect. Cain went out from the presence of the Lord. The same infidel principle which infected the mind of Cain, and which is so common at this day, seems to have reigned in his family. No mention of the worship of God amongst his descendants is made in the scriptures. Indeed, the fact that they were infidels, seems to be recognised by Eve; for when Seth was born, she said, "God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew."

Amongst the descendants of Seth the worship of God was cultivated. Amongst them is found an Enoch, who walked with God, and a Lamech, who piously recognised the curse of the fall, and a Noah, who found grace in the sight of the Holy One. These two families seem to have lived almost without intercourse with one another. At length, in consequence of the marriage of the pious sons of Seth with the polished and beautiful daughters of Cain, through several generations, the whole mass of mankind became corrupted; and the indignation of Jehovah against them was roused.

He first sent Enoch, the seventh from Adam, to warn them, saying, "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." And it is altogether probable, that he continued to warn them till he was taken up into heaven.

But, notwithstanding these warnings, the wicked boldly went on in their way. "And the Lord said, my Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he is

flesh, yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants (robbers,) in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them; the same became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown. "And God saw the wickedness of man that it was great in the earth, and that every imagination of his heart was evil continually. And it repented him that he had made man upon the earth, and it grieved him at the heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air." * * * But Noah found grace in his sight. With the exception of the remaining patriarchs, he seems to have been the only individual on the face of the earth who feared God, and wrought righteousness. Not another man of his generation seems to have known God, or to have feared him. The earth was corrupt before God, and was filled with violence, and God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way.

But before their final overthrow, God sent forth Noah to warn them. At the time when the determination of God respecting the antediluvian world was revealed to him, he was four hundred and eighty years old. He was a preacher of righteousness. Allowing eighty years for his minority, we are compelled to conclude, that he had been preaching righteousness four hundred years. What admirable perseverance, to preach during a period almost two hundred years longer than this country has been settled by a civilized man; and yet not one individual of his own generation is known to have been brought to repentance! What a commentary is this fact upon a doctrine of the present day, that he is a faithless preacher, who does not convert fifty or a

hundred souls in a single year! All this period the indignation of God had been becoming more pressing, and the time approaching, when his determination to destroy them should be revealed to Noah.

At length the day arrived. "God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher-wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it, within and without, with pitch." "And behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh."

Here was a time, when the mind of Noah must have been intensely agitated. Around him were neighbors, with whom he had been associated for nearly five hundred years; and they were doomed to perish by the waters. His brothers and sisters, the sons of Lamech his father, were not secured from the flood. He could not fail to look abroad on the numerous and busy population of the earth, and foresee, that they all must be overwhelmed in the deluge; that their bodies, after being tossed on the great deep, must lie unburied on the surface of the earth, and there decay, and mingle with the dust from which they were originally taken. A more fearful anticipation never occupied a human bosom! A more pressing, agitating thought never entered the human mind. If Xerxes wept, when he viewed his army, and anticipated the day when not one of them should be alive, what must have been the emotions of Noah, when he came to know, that not merely a small portion of men, consisting at most of only a few millions, but the whole population of the earth, would be overwhelmed in one promiscuous ruin! Let it not be supposed, that the population of the earth, at this period, was small. It had indeed existed only about two-fifths

as long before the flood as since, but the average length of human life was at least twelve times as great before the flood as at the present time. Even if there were no greater number of children, in a single family, than there now is, it is certain that the population of the earth was greater. And if, as some suppose, the number of children in each family was proportionate to the duration of life in the parents, then it would follow, that the earth literally teemed with human beings, and the population was many fold more numerous than at the present time. But however great it might have been, it was all to be destroyed. Not one of all those sons of wickedness was to escape. And how fearful the thought! How overwhelming the anticipation!

Noah was a preacher of righteousness. There is no authority for believing, that, at this time, there was another in this fallen world. But how could he go forward and warn men of the destruction which was coming upon them? It must have seemed to him almost too fearful a work for any man to undertake. If Jonah said, while yet in his own country, that God would spare the men of the single city of Nineveh, what must Noah have felt in respect to a world that was lying in wickedness? Did he not think that they might repent and be forgiven? Did he not fear, that they might survive the specified period, and live to accuse him of being a false prophet? Yet we hear nothing of his fleeing from the presence of the Lord; we hear nothing of his taking a ship, to flee from the place where God was wont to make communications to him. Instead of fleeing from the presence of the Lord, he went immediately forward, and in the spirit of Christ warned that world of disobedient men, who are now the spirits in the prison of eternal despair; for the scripture saith, By the which Spirit he (Christ,) went and preached unto the spirits

in prison; that is, he inspired Noah, by his Spirit, to go and preach unto the spirits, then in this world, but now in the prison of despair: during that period of disobedience, in which "the long-suffering of God waited, in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, in which few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water."—1 *Peter* iii. 19, 20. Noah, then, in the true spirit of Christ, went steadily forward. Unlike Jonah, he did not fear that they would repent! He did not fear that they would be saved. He did not fear that he should be accounted a false prophet. Noah would have rejoiced to see the tall sinners of the old world believe God, and proclaim a fast, and put on sackcloth. He would have been in an ecstacy, to see their kings come down from their thrones, and lay their robes of royalty aside, and cover themselves with sackcloth, and sit down in ashes. He would have exulted in seeing proclamations going forth from the highest authority, calling on all to fast, and to cry mightily unto God, and to turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in his hands. He would have triumphed at the sight of a repenting world, even though, at the predicted day, the windows of heaven had not been opened, nor the fountains of the great deep broken up, nor a flood of waters let in on the ungodly. Amidst all those considerations, which hung so heavily on the heart of Noah, he went steadily forward, and solemnly preached righteousness one hundred and twenty years; although no success had attended his labors through four hundred years, and although success would have brought upon him more perplexity than could have fallen upon Jonah, he went deliberately forward, relying only on the Holy One of Israel, "and did all that the Lord commanded him."

Again, Noah fully believing that God would destroy

the world, might have reasoned that it would do no good to preach righteousness to them. Were he like many in modern times, we should expect to find him saying, the earth is full of wickedness; "Every imagination of the heart of man is evil, and only evil, and that continually." Their conduct indicates that they are given over of God. The declaration, that he will destroy them with a flood, indicates that there is no hope of their reformation. Why should I labor amongst them, and spend my days and nights in useless anxieties? I have already preached many years to this wicked generation, and what has been gained? But Noah knew, that whilst the salvation of men is one great end of preaching the gospel, there are also others. He knew the importance to the divine character, of their being solemnly warned. He understood the importance of vindicating the forbearance and the justice of God, and of making it evident to principalities and powers in heavenly places, and also to the consciences of all who should perish, that God is merciful and gracious, long-suffering and slow to anger, and abundant in goodness, and will by no means clear the guilty. Unlike many of modern times, who think that they must abandon the spot, where human obstinacy does not at once yield to their feeble efforts, he labored during one hundred and twenty years; knowing that those who faithfully bear the messages of God, are a sweet savor unto him, in those that are saved and those that are lost. Like one in later times, he seemed to hear a voice whispering in his ear, "And now, saith the Lord, that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, though Israel be not gathered; yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength." Under such motives, Noah steadily warned his generation, seeking no other end than that of glori-

fying God and enjoying him; and he went forward, and did all that God commanded.

Another consideration would have pressed heavily on every earthly mind, and must have suggested itself to Noah.

The work, which God requires me to do, will expose me to the contempt of all mankind. The period of the flood is very distant. The work of building the ark is great. The aged may doubt its propriety. The giants in sin will scoff at me as a madman. The effect on my preaching will be disastrous. With what countenance can I go and rebuke men for sin, and urge them to repent, when all the world will know that I am engaged in building a ship on dry land, at a distance from navigable water; that I have been so long gazing on a few sins, that exist in some outrageous men, as to believe that all the earth is equally corrupt; as to magnify the sin of this generation, in my own mind, into such enormities, as to be distressed respecting it, to be agitated by it, to dream about it, and finally to persuade myself into an unalterable conviction, that God has determined to destroy the world by a flood of water; and in consequence of this monomania, I am daily engaged in bringing timber from the mountains, and nails of iron and brass from the factories of Tubal-Cain; and then some also will say, He is a deceiver; for notwithstanding he is engaged in building an ark, yet the time of his flood is so far off, that he thinks he shall die before it is completed; or, in the intermediate time, something will occur, which he will interpret as a reformation; and thus find an apology for not bringing on his flood. They will say, He has labored many years. The fathers did not notice him; and he has hit on this artifice to attract attention, and gain an influence which his talents could never secure to him. Had Noah been like some

of us, he would have been appalled by public opinion respecting his motives. He would have hesitated to put his hand to the work. But no such hesitation is found in Noah. "By faith, Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Such was his faith in God, that he went directly forward, and did "all that God commanded him, so did he."

A further consideration, which must have pressed heavily on the mind of Noah, was the condition of his relations.

His father, indeed, finished his mortal career five years before the flood. His grandfather, the venerable Methuselah, died the same year that Noah entered into the ark. All his ancestry, back to Adam, had closed their eyes in death. But where were the brethren and sisters of his father, who seem to have been taken away from the evil to come? Where were their children? Where were the brothers and sisters of Noah? What a fearful anticipation was it to look forward to the day, when all that was bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, should strangle and sink like lead in the mighty deep? What could more seriously depress and agitate this servant of God, than to look forward to the day when he alone, like a single tree of the forest, should be left of the whole human family! And when he looked forward to the hour of separation, and anticipated their continued unbelief, and imagined the paleness which would sit on their countenances, and the tremulousness of their material frames, when the flood should begin to rise on the earth; and then traced them, in his mind, to the highest eminences around them, and finally falling, one after another, into the rising gulf, till not one of them

survived, and he was left alone amidst the wide wreck of the human race; when he anticipated these things, how must his soul have been agitated! How like the knell of death in his household, must the sound of every blow on the ark have fallen on his ear! What agony must the advancing work have caused in his bosom! Although it was the appointed means of saving himself and her who was to be his companion, and their seed, yet it was one vast monument in memory of the destruction of the world. But he went deliberately forward, and completed the work according to the commandment of the Lord.

After one hundred and twenty years, the ark was completed. In the intermediate time, Noah had taken a wife; and unto him were born Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And the Lord spake unto Noah, and said, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark, for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee, by sevens, the male and his female; and of beasts that are not clean, by two, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air, by sevens, the male and his female, to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made, will I destroy from off the face of the earth."

"And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood." Here a scene occurred, which ought to have astonished and convinced the degenerate sons of that generation. The beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, the creeping things of the earth, admonished by God, went in, two and two, unto Noah, into the ark, the male and the female, as God commanded Noah."

One would suppose, that the most skeptical would

now have stood *aghast*. What a commentary is this on the character of man—fallen, degenerate man! Verily, "the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib," but rational man doth not know—man, with all his boasted wisdom, doth not consider. Whilst the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the reptiles of the earth were fleeing to the ark, how were the depraved sons of men employed? Ah, they were "Eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away."—*Matthew* xxiv. 38.

"In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened; and the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights."

"And the flood was forty days upon the earth, and the waters increased and bare up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went on the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth, and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died, that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was on the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed, which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowls of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth; and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark."

"And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark; and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged. The fountains also of the deep, and the windows of heaven, were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. And the waters returned from off the earth continually; and after the end of the hundred and fifty days, the waters were abated. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on one of the mountains of Ararat."

What now must the feelings of Noah have been? Recently, he was dwelling on the land. Now, he inhabited a vast globe of water. Recently, he was surrounded by a world of living, thinking, acting beings. Now, he was alone of his generation. His friends, his kindred, his acquaintance, had been swept away by the flood. The moment of their death, and the place of their remains, he knew not. All the memorials of them had perished. With what unutterable emotions must he now have thought on those who had sunk like lead in the mighty waters! With what agony must his soul have meditated on the vast ruin, and said, "O, that ye had been wise, that ye had considered this, that ye had thought on your latter end!"

And while his soul thus mourned over a world recently lying in wickedness, and now suffering the pains of eternal fire, with what thankfulness must he have looked up to God for his own deliverance!

And though in every particular he had obeyed God, yet he could not attribute his safety in this wreck of the world to his own obedience. With him the thanksgiving was not that he had done the things which God required, and which were necessary to his preservation, but that God had prepared his heart to believe his word, and to be moved by it. It was "By faith, Noah,

being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved by fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." As he looked on the seven human beings who escaped the deluge, his grateful heart must have said, by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of myself, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. Every man who is truly a believer, has within him a spirit which acknowledges God, not only as the author of his salvation, but of the disposition in him which leads him to receive it. He looks unto Jesus, the author and finisher of his faith. He does not feel that he is competent even to strengthen his own faith, but cries, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief; Lord, increase our faith." Noah was as much indebted to God for the gift of faith to believe the things not seen as yet, as for the revelation of the things themselves, or for the manner of constructing a vessel in which he might be saved from the flood. Noah will never be heard in eternity celebrating his own obedience. No; as often as he shall remember the flood, he will also remember and celebrate the grace of God, which wrought in him the faith that produced obedience. This was the grand point of distinction between him and the old world. It was the reason of the difference in their lives. It was the reason of the difference in the termination of their mortal career.

My hearers—God has threatened to overwhelm the ungodly in perdition.

He has prepared an ark: Flee to it.

The storm will soon descend, not for forty days, but forever.

SERMON XXXII.

GOD THE SUPREME OBJECT OF AFFECTION.

LUKE xiv. 33.—"So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

OUR Saviour had here been endeavoring to correct the views of those who suppose, that to serve him, and to secure his eternal favor, requires only a slight change either within their own bosoms, or in their relation to the objects by which we are surrounded. For this reason, he had told the multitudes by whom he was surrounded, that to become his disciples, it was requisite that they should undergo such an internal alteration, that their affection for their nearest earthly relations would not be worthy to be named in comparison with their love of him. "If any man come unto me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." It ought not to be supposed that the Saviour here inculcated as duty, the indulging of any malicious feelings towards our kindred according to the flesh, nor that he designed to stir up men to vexation with their own bodies. This is contrary to the whole current of scripture. Amongst the worst indications of wickedness mentioned in the Bible, is the want of "natural affection." Nor can any command be found in the scriptures, which enjoins on men the duty of abating their affection for their kindred. In the language of the Bible, one thing is often compared with another, even where the form of the comparison is not expressed. This is true in the present instance. The

Saviour does not require men, in becoming his disciples, to abhor father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even their own life; but to have an affection for the Almighty, in comparison with which, all our affection for other beings is not worthy to be named: An affection, to whose exercise all our attachment to other beings is strictly subservient: An affection, which will invariably move us to adhere to Jehovah, and to do his will in preference to any controvening dictate of parents, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, children, or even of our own hearts. This, then, is one of the things to which Christ referred in the text.

Another thing to which he refers, and in respect to which he spoke, is the endurance of trials on his account. "Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

A third thing which precedes the general assertion in the text, and to which he evidently refers, is the sacrifices which those must make who would be indeed his disciples. "For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?"

Another point to which he evidently refers, is the effort which it will require to resist and overcome the world. "Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first and consulteth whether he be able to meet him that cometh against him?"

Another point, relates to the skill which is requisite to avoid those temptations by which we shall be likely to be overcome.

All these seem to have entered into the Saviour's estimate of the things which are to be considered by every one who sets out on a journey to heaven. In reference to these things, in all their attitudes and bear-

ings, the Saviour said, "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

To be Christ's disciple in this sense, implies, I. The possession of a heart subdued by divine grace, and wrought into conformity to the divine image.

It implies, II. A cordial reception of him as the Teacher *of all* that is to be believed respecting our spiritual condition, and all that is to be done to secure the favor of God and eternal life.

III. It implies, a title through grace to all the consolations of the Spirit in this life, and to all the enjoyments of the saints in that which is to come.

Now, to be a disciple of Christ, requires all these characteristics, and involves all these high destinies. Discipleship of the Saviour, then, includes whatever is most dear to us in this life, and most desirable in the world to come. It is important, then, to give the more earnest heed to the instructions of our Lord Jesus Christ, lest at any time we should let them slip. And this is specially true of the passage to which we are to-day called to attend. "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

As I have already suggested to you, in respect to seeking mainly the kingdom of God and his righteousness, so I am obliged to say in respect to this passage, that it seems to me to have been misapprehended by those who have read it. From the course of many who even name the name of Christ, I am led to doubt, whether they do not understand this and its correlative passages to say, "whosoever he be of you that adhereth not to all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." The prevailing love of the world, and of its possessions, and enjoyments, is so strong amongst us, as to indicate that there is some misapprehension on this subject. What-

ever the theory be, there is a practical, a prevalent, and almost an universal misapprehension in respect to our duty. Almost every thing around us, seems to indicate that there is a strong tendency to hold fast the things of this world. Whatever may become of the things which pertain to eternity, we seem to feel that the things of time must be secured. For these we labor. For these we aspire. On these we fix our affections and our hopes. And in so high a degree does this tendency prevail amongst us, that our general course is nearly in direct opposition to that which the Saviour declares to be the way to heaven.

That we may no longer cherish even the practical persuasion, that while fully grasping the world, we are yet in the way to heaven, I ask your attention to a consideration of the meaning of the passage, "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

You may be ready here to inquire, What is meant by this saying of the Saviour? Is it meant that we should not own houses, and lands, and herds, and flocks? Does the gospel require us either to abandon all these to decay, or to sell them, and expend all our property in the cause of benevolence and piety? To this I reply, It does not. No such claim as this has ever been made on the children of God. Nor can the transactions of some disciples on the day of pentecost, who sold their houses and lands, and gave the proceeds to the disciples for the use of the multitude who had assembled to hear the gospel, be alleged to sustain this course. The vast collection of poor strangers who then were at Jerusalem, and desired to hear the gospel, and who, unless they were furnished with food, must go away, and perhaps die in their sins, created an emergency, which every benevolent heart was anxious to meet—

an emergency, which may not again occur till the archangel shall lift his hand and swear, that time shall be no more. To urge what occurred in this emergency as an example for all generations, and in every variety of circumstances, would be manifestly improper. Nor do the apostles speak of this transaction, either as a duty, or as an example. When Ananias, by professing to have given the full amount for which he had sold his land, to these purposes, had lied unto the Holy Ghost, the apostle rebuked him in language which implies, that the profession of Christianity does not alter, and never was designed to alter the ownership of property. To this man who had lied unto God, Peter said, "While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" You were under no requisition to contribute all that you had. No one had required this of you. Why, then, did you pretend that you had done it? Why did Satan fill thy heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost? This passage renders it clear, that the property of Christians is their own, in the same meaning and sense as that of other men.

But if to be disciples of Christ, it is not required to abandon our property, what then can be meant by the requisition to forsake all that we have? "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart." "Love not the world, neither the things of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." We are not, then, required to abandon our houses and lands, and to become vagabonds in the earth, but we are to take off our affections from these earthly possessions, and fix our hearts on the inexhaustible glories of the Godhead. We are to regard all earthly things as simply the illustrations of the greatness, the wisdom, and the goodness of our Creator; as

designed not to be the end of our pursuits, or the grand objects of our attainment, but simply as conveniences, furnished to us by Jehovah in our way towards heaven. We are not to suffer these gifts of the Creator to entangle our affections, and to keep them from rising and dwelling on him. But if we find our hearts lingering around these objects, and pining to find in them a home, we must withdraw our affections from them. We must, in this respect, forsake them. Our affections must be turned away from these things, and fixed on the great and eternal Author of all beings. No loving or serving the creature rather than the Creator, will be tolerated by him who made all things. In this respect, we may perhaps easily test our own characters. Where are now our affections? Where have they been for the months that are past? What has been the character of our feelings, our choice, and our acts, in those times, when the service of God and the service of the world have been at the same time in our view? Has the world predominated? Has it, in almost every instance, gained the ascendancy? Has it withheld you from the private exercise of those feelings of devotion which are required in the word of God? Has it precluded you from the exercise of that social religion, which ought to have led you to speak often one to another, and to meet often together to encourage each other's hearts, and to strengthen each other's hands, and to call down the blessings of heaven on yourselves and on all around you? Then you have cause for fear, that your heart is yet under its control, and that you have not forsaken all that you have, and that you are not Christ's disciples.

2. The expression also involves the idea of making sacrifices for the cause of Christ. And here let me not be understood to say, that this relates merely to the possessions of this world. Though the individual, who

has ceased to regard these possessions as his chief good, and has taken off his affections from them, is qualified in heart to make sacrifices for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, and will rejoice whenever opportunity is presented, to give of his substance for the circulation of the Bible, for the sustaining of missionaries in heathen lands, and for all the noble purposes contemplated in the means of grace—though such an heart cannot be kept back from entering deeply into efforts of this nature, yet this is not all. In addition to this feeling, there is the sacrifice of the ease, which is so sweet to man, and for which we so anxiously long. Many are willing to yield a very commendable portion of their possessions, who nevertheless are unwilling to deny themselves that repose, which seems to be an essential element of human depravity. The victims of ignorance and of sin may be suffering on every side, and yet they are unmoved. The destruction of souls may be going on at noon-day, and yet no thrilling anxiety to save men from eternal ruin awakens them from their repose. A world may be falling into eternal ruin, and the cries of souls, as they go down to despair, may ascend and reach their ears, and they may be echoed back from the whole vault of heaven; and yet they are not roused from their lethargy.

But from this condition, grace effectually delivers those who are really born of God. The cry of perishing souls, in their own vicinity, causes them to put far away every feeling of repose. Their souls kindle into an intense ardor for the welfare and the salvation of immortal beings. If a child be wandering in ignorance, they hasten to find and to place him in the way of righteousness. If youth are growing up in sin, they are found near and ready to lead them in the way of holiness. If hoary age is hastening to destruction, their

prayers are continually ascending to God for the renewing influences of his grace; and all their plans and powers of persuasion are put into requisition to reclaim the wanderer. Even if, in the providence of God, it be made their duty to go forth, and personally to convey the word of life to those who are sitting in regions of darkness and the shadow of death, their regard for the ease and the enjoyments of this life will all yield to the superior claims of the Almighty, and they will readily abandon all things else, to be instrumental of glorifying God in the salvation of man. Thus it is with the hearts of the genuine disciples of Christ. They do not hold any of the things of this life so closely that they cannot be yielded, whenever God shall demand them. "Whosoever loveth his own life more than me, is not worthy to be my disciple." This may seem to some, who have never felt the power of divine love, to be a most remarkable characteristic. But who has not read of individuals in ancient times, too numerous to be mentioned, who, when they must relinquish either Christ or their earthly all, "Took joyfully the spoiling of their goods; and had also trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments: who were stoned, who were sawed asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented." Are you inclined to believe, that this preparation of the heart to endure evils has ceased with the occasions which developed it? Are you disposed to think, that this spirit has departed from the Christian world, never to return? I tell you, nay. Though the mantle of Christianity may hang lightly upon many who have named the name of Christ; I declare unto you, that were days to come which would demand of us the relinquishment of all we hold dear, which would require

us either to relinquish Christianity, or to go to the block, or to the scaffold, there would not be wanting men who would breast the storm, and quietly endure all that persecution could inflict on them; rejoicing that they are counted worthy to suffer for the sake of Christ and his cause.

3. To be the disciples of Christ requires not merely the abandonment of our own ease, nor the endurance of great trials, but a submissive and joyful bearing of all the inferior causes of inquietude, which we may be called to endure.

There is, particularly in the early stages of the Christian course, an exposure to trials of a peculiar nature. When men have advanced far in the Christian career, their former comrades in sin do not think it possible, that they can divert them from the way to Zion; and hence they retire from all efforts to turn them from the way of godliness. But in the early periods of his journey towards heaven, the young Christian often meets things which it is a trial to surmount. He is bound in society by a thousand tender associations, to those of his own age—the companions of his childhood and his youth. His heart has beat in unison with their hearts. His delights have been, in a high degree, derived from them. His thoughts have been their thoughts, and his ways have been their ways. Now, in coming into the family of Christ, his thoughts on many important and practical subjects, must differ from theirs. His feelings must be different from theirs. His course of life must differ from theirs. Though as individuals he cannot but love them, he knows that he must not walk with them in any of their sinful ways, nor in any of those paths which lead ultimately to transgression. And here he will find constant occasions to deny himself, and to take up his cross. Perhaps, in these circum-

stances, many find the most trying points of their religious career. The world, especially to the young, holds forth the most fascinating attractions. All their early habits; all the remains of their unsubdued propensities; all the influence of their early friendships, urge them to conform to the habits, the maxims, and the practices of those amongst whom they dwell. On the other hand, our Lord Jesus Christ commands them, "Be not conformed unto this world, but be ye transformed, by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." And here the Christian finds himself to be under the power of two counteracting influences. One or the other of them must be overcome. If he would go to heaven, he must yield obedience to the commands of Christ, and must cleave only to the Lord his God. Whatever unlawful or unholy thing he is required to forsake, must be immediately abandoned. "No man can serve two masters."—"Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

Nor is this principle applicable merely to the young Christian. There are various things in the life of those who are farther advanced in a profession of godliness, which call for submission to what may be at first a means of annoyance. Whenever the Christian finds it to be his duty to abandon any course of life to which he has been long accustomed; when he knows that for this abandonment of what he has learned to be sinful, by an examination either of the word of God, or of the legitimate results of his conduct; when he arrives at this knowledge, there he must stop. No pleasure, no profit, no other consideration ought to impel him to go farther. If he be indeed a Christian, he will stop. Whatever inquietude it may cause him; whatever loss he may incur, or whatever reproach he may suffer; when any of these things comes into competition with Christ, or

his cause; with duty, or the way to heaven, he will give up all, rather than to continue either in sin, or in doing that which may cause others to sin. To such circumstances, the words of Christ seem to have a special application: "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

4. Nor can *he* be a disciple of Christ, who does not abandon any course which his inclinations dispose him to take, in contravention of the precepts of the Bible.

Here we ought carefully to distinguish between what is explicitly enjoined in the scriptures, or directly inferable from them, and the dictates of expediency. Expediency is not a safe guide either in morals or religion. Things may be expedient, and as such ought to be done. But this principle must not be applied in religion. If the scriptures are a perfect guide in respect to our duty, then there can be no need of going beyond them for the direction of our lives. That they are a sufficient rule, no protestant will deny. That through grace they are able to make men wise unto salvation—that they are competent to form such characters as those of David, and Paul, and Timothy—no one will dispute. Why, then, should we go beyond the circle of inspired truth, to look for rules to guide our hearts and our lives?

But when we have ascertained from the scriptures, that Jehovah requires of us a particular act or course of actions, we must not neglect them because they are contrary to our inclinations. These must be brought into subserviency to the revealed will of God. At no moment may our inclinations be allowed to resist the commands of the Almighty. All our internal tendencies, in a different direction, must be abandoned. How-

ever strongly we may desire to take a different course, these desires must be checked and subdued. However powerful our propensity to a forbidden thing may be; however great our relish and anxious our desire, we must resist and overcome them. We must be lovers of God, rather than lovers of pleasure; and he who is not, cannot be a disciple of Christ.

5. We must forsake all reliance on our own righteousness, and accept that which is offered to us in the gospel. If cleaving to our earthly possessions, and loving created objects more than God, the creator of all, is sinful, how much more sinful is it, to value our own righteousness more than the righteousness of Christ! The true Christian not only ceases to love the world more than God, but he also ceases to regard his own righteousness above that of Christ. He regards himself as a poor, guilty being—as having no native righteousness—and as perfectly unworthy of the loving kindness, or even the tender mercy of God. He henceforth forsakes all reliance on his own righteousness. He beholds a glory in Christ which totally eclipses all the doings of men; and he stretches forth the arms of his faith and receives this righteousness, as the ground of his acceptance with God, and as the foundation of all his hopes of eternal glory. Thus he relinquishes, not merely the affectionate hold which the impenitent have on this world, but his own ease, so far as it is incompatible with his duty to Christ and his cause. He is willing to suffer any inconveniences, and prepared to endure any persecutions to which an adherence to Christ may subject him. He is ready to resist his own inclinations, and to cast away his dependence on his own righteousness, and cheerfully to rely on that of a Saviour. Thus he is prepared to forsake all that he hath: and to commit his interests, for this life and for

eternity, to the care of him who hath loved us, and given himself for us.

"And here these interests are safe."

"Godliness hath the promise of this life, and of that which is to come."

Who, then, will not commit his all to the care of the Almighty?

SERMON XXXIII.

INDICATIONS OF APPROACHING BLESSINGS.

PSALM cii. 14.—"For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof."

THE condition of the Israelites in respect to opportunities for serving the Lord, was entirely peculiar. Their religion was widely different from that of any of the nations around them. Instead of collecting from every part of the world, those objects which are called gods, and placing them in temples, and falling down before them and asking the favors of which they had need, and giving thanks for their numerous blessings, they entered a temple, reared indeed by human hands, but designed as a place for the worship of a Being purely spiritual. Here were his altars. Around them stood his victims. At a distance, and concealed from the gaze of the mass of mankind, was the ark, represented as borne by animals of intelligence, and strength, and swiftness. Above the ark was reared a mercy-seat, or

species of throne, but no material being sat upon it. To mortal eyes it was vacant. Thus it taught that their God is an immaterial and spiritual being. This fact was calculated to give the Israelites not only a veneration for the God of Jacob, but a contempt for all those objects which are falsely called gods. The heathen, though they had the means of knowing Jehovah, and though guilty for not knowing and obeying him, were for the most part ignorant of his existence, and of his right to govern the world. As they did not know Jehovah, they could not understand the true reason why the Israelites adopted such a mode of worship, and they concluded, therefore, that it was for the purpose of bringing the religion of all other nations into contempt. This charge was often made and repeated against the Israelites; and hence, a dire hostility against them was felt amongst all other nations. The wars which were waged for their destruction, were begun, not so much for the purpose of obtaining their territory, or securing a tribute, or acquiring national renown, as to destroy the worship of the true God, and blot out his ordinances from under heaven. And hence, with every inroad of foreigners, there were introduced into some part of the land, the gods of the invading nations; and portions of the people were brought under the influence of idolatry. It was therefore desirable, that the place where God was specially worshipped, where his temple was erected, and all his sacred rites performed, should be so strongly fortified, as to be impregnable. In the time of David, the capital of the Jebusites was taken, and made the capital of the Jewish empire. The natural facilities for protecting the city from the violent incursions of an invading army, together with its numerous artificial muniments, rendered it peculiarly fitted to be the site of the temple, and the place for the

public worship of Jehovah. Hither, the tribes went up to worship. Here, victims were brought and burned on the altar. Here, notes of praise, and fervent supplications, were constantly ascending to him that is able to save. And hence it was, that so deep an interest was felt in every part of the land, for the safety of Jerusalem. Hence it was, that such an earnestness respecting building up the walls, and fortifying the city, appears to pervade the bosom of every devout Israelite; and that, in the midst of their most fervid and spiritual devotions, they express such anxiety respecting the city. It contained all that on earth was dear to their hearts. Here were concentrated all their means for knowing their duty, and all the utensils which God had appointed to be used in his service. Let these be taken away; let an invader enter and plunder the sacred city, and the temple; and what on earth could attract the attention, or fill with delight the mind of a pious descendant of Abraham? It was not, then, the glow of unhallowed patriotism, that made them so often pray for the peace of Jerusalem. It was not the unhallowed ambition which pants to outdo, in order and in prosperity, every other nation. No; it was an anxiety for the safety of the means of divine worship. It was an irrepressible desire for the continuance and the perpetuation of all that was dear to the hearts of those who loved the ways of Zion. And hence, the safety of the city came at length to denote the security, not only of the city, but of religion; and the building up of the city, signified the increase of religion. Now, when the psalmist, by the beautiful figure of building up the city, had asserted, that the time for peculiar spiritual blessings had come, he affirms as a reason for his assertion, "Thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof." The terms "stones," and "dust,"

are here used to denote the means by which the walls would be built, or strengthened. The phrase in this connexion, then, assigns as a reason for expecting peculiar spiritual blessings, that the servants of God feel a special delight in the means by which the interests of his kingdom are advanced.

The reason here assigned for expecting peculiar spiritual blessings, is one which we can easily comprehend. Still it may be difficult immediately to see how this delight in the means, should promote the interests of Christ's kingdom. It will, therefore, be necessary to consider the influence which a deep interest in the means of salvation will have on mankind.

We are all aware that every man is influenced by those around him.

If an individual acquires a relish for almost any employment, and enters upon it with ardor, and pursues it with fidelity, and with success, his neighbors are not uninterested spectators. Though they may be inclined at first to make his pursuit a subject merely of merriment, they soon learn to respect it, and wish that they were as happily, and usefully, and profitably employed, as they see him to be. Their wishes are followed by desires. Their desires by efforts. And from the enterprize and the example of a single individual, an interest is excited, which guides and controls a neighborhood, and even a wide extent of country. Almost every heart seems to kindle, and almost every tongue adds to the excitement, and almost every hand is employed in the same avocation.

By a similar process, the interest of a few in the service of God, becomes general.

When individuals begin to give special attention to the oracles of God—when they evince that the scriptures are their delight, sweeter to their taste than the

honey, or the honey-comb; when the law of the Lord is manifestly a source of rich enjoyment, and evidently their meditation all the day; when, in appropriate circumstances, they appear ever ready to speak concerning the excellency of the scriptures, of their purifying, and elevating, and heavenly influence, then others, who have never felt the transforming power of the oracles of God, listen with fixed attention. They become inclined to know those truths which are described as so powerful over the propensities, and so productive of delight. Their desire ripens into anxiety. And though it do not manifest itself in any peculiar, sudden acquisition of divine knowledge, yet as it increases, it impels its subject to read, then to study the scriptures, and at length, to understand his duty and his destiny. The delight of a few individuals in the word of God, and their persevering efforts to understand it, often spreads through a neighborhood, and incites a large portion of the inhabitants to learn the statutes of the Lord. And whenever we see such efforts; whenever we find a few individuals thus earnestly engaged in inquiries after their duty; we feel almost sure of the result. We feel that other individuals will soon inhale their spirit, and manifest a similar earnestness in ascertaining their duty, and their interminable destiny.

But this is not the only particular, in which the interest of a few often affects the whole.

When the people of God feel, not only the necessity of understanding, but of doing their duty; when they begin to perceive their alienation from God, and to know the coldness which pervades their hearts, and the unfruitfulness of their lives, and to appreciate the necessity of putting off the old man, with his deeds, which are corrupt, and of putting on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and in holiness;

when they carefully avoid those things, which are injurious to men and offensive to God; when they watch, not only over their actions, but over their words and their thoughts; then others take knowledge of them, that they have been with Jesus, and understand that their lives are regulated by principles of unearthly origin. They perceive, that the feelings of the Christian are pure, that his motives are noble, his conduct elevated, and his prospects cheering. All this the impenitent can perceive; and when they see it, they secretly desire that their own conduct were as pure, and their prospects of future happiness as clear, as those of him who manifestly fears God and keeps his commandments. Yes, brethren, the Christian whose life accords with the rules given by the prophets, the Saviour, and the apostles, produces a silent but powerful effect on every immortal being around him. And though he were never to utter a sentence in favor of Christianity, though he were to exhibit only the operation of its holy principles on his heart and his actions, yet would his life be a pole star, to guide every wandering mariner to the haven of eternal rest. For it would show, not only that he seeks a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, but it would mark out the way thither, and have a persuasive influence over all his acquaintance, secretly enticing them to walk in the paths of peace, to eternal glory. And when we see Christians exhibiting in their lives all that is amiable, and pure, and devotional, we cannot but feel that the set time to favor Zion is near; and assign as a reason for our assertion, that the people of God are letting their light so shine, that others, seeing their good works, will be influenced to glorify our Father who is in heaven.

But there is no need, that the influence of Christians should go forth only in their silent example. Their

devotions often produce great effects on the kingdom of Christ.

In the thought of speaking to the King of kings, there is something calculated to inspire the heart with awe. We cannot seriously contemplate the act of drawing near to the majesty of heaven and earth, without emotions of sacred reverence. So sacred is the employment, that we tremble at the idea of entering upon it. And this effect is felt, not only by those who personally approach the throne of grace, but by all who know their intercourse with Jehovah. We cannot see an individual, whom we know daily to bow, and pour forth his thanks and his supplications before God, without emotions of respect for his character, and desires that we were equally devout. We cannot see a few of the people of God assemble for the purpose of singing the songs of Zion; of calling on the name of the Lord; of invoking his guidance and his mercy for themselves, and the influences of his Spirit for others; we cannot see all this, without desiring to feel as they feel, and to be prepared for the world to which they are manifestly destined. However disinclined we may naturally be, to mingle our voices and our desires with those of the people of God, yet their example has a powerful effect on our feelings, and awakens deep anxiety for reconciliation to our Father in heaven. And I appeal to the memory of every Christian, and ask, if you cannot remember the time, when the sight of an individual going to the place of his devotion, or of a few saints meeting together for the purpose of imploring the special blessing of heaven, has arrested your attention, and caused you to pant for the renewal of your heart? And has not this influence often become so powerful, as to cause you to retire, where no human eye saw you, to seek the Lord? And has it not, at length, become an

anxiety so great, that you could not give sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, till you had through grace committed your immortal interests to the care of Jehovah, and acknowledged the Saviour as your only Deliverer? Remember, then, what effects have been produced on you by the example of others, and labor that your lives may be productive of effects equally blessed.

But whilst the devotions of Christians are attended by this collateral effect, their direct tendency is exceedingly powerful. Far be it from me to assert, that every disciple of Christ will obtain precisely the thing for which he prays, or that the manner in which he receives the blessing will exactly correspond with his expectations. We should ever remember, that the Lord is in heaven, and we on the earth. We should feel, that we cannot understand the bearing of one event upon every other event or object which he is about to accomplish. With a full view of our own ignorance; with all humility and contrition of spirit; should we submit our desires to God, with a confidence, not that he will gratify all our inclinations, but that he will hear our petitions, and do for us that which will best promote our good and the glorious interests of his kingdom. The opinion, that Christians will obtain whatever they ask, at the time and in the manner which they expect, is utterly at variance with every feeling of humility, and with the experience of every saint. It virtually takes from the hand of the Omniscient the reins of moral government, and places them in the power of erring mortals; and nothing is left to Jehovah but to accomplish whatever they shall dictate. Whilst, therefore, I solemnly protest against any opinion which shall place the government of the universe in the hands of men, or divest Jehovah of his right to govern the world, and direct all its concerns by his own unerring wisdom, I would not

have you feel that prayer is useless. Though you can see no natural connexion between a feeble cry, going forth from a humble heart, and ascending up before God, and the bestowment of the blessing desired, yet we are divinely informed, that great results may be expected. The fervent and constant prayer of the devout man availeth much. "For this will I be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." We are taught, that when God is about abundantly to promote any of their interests, an unusual spirit of prayer is found to exist amongst his people. When the Israelites were carried away into captivity, they were not restored till Daniel had set himself to seek the Lord, and to confess the sins of the people, and to pray that they might be forgiven; and till the sons of Jacob, hanging their harps on the willows, humbled themselves before Jehovah.—The soul of Nehemiah, struggling under the depression occasioned by the ruin of the sacred city, and its wall, and gates, came before his Creator, and cried, "Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandest thy servant Moses, saying, if ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations. But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments and do them, though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place, that I have chosen to set my name there." And after such fasting, and confession, and prayer, the Lord touched the hearts of the Persian kings; and they commanded the Jews to return, and rebuild their city, and re-establish their ordinances of worship.

Before the notable gift of the Holy Ghost on the day of pentecost, the disciples, few and timorous, went into the city, and abode in an upper chamber, and continued, with one accord, in prayer and supplication. And their

hearts were soon made glad by a wonderful increase of those who were ready to acknowledge Christ as their Redeemer and their Lord.

But I need not multiply instances, in proof of this position. It is a truth so well known, as long since to have passed into a maxim, that some great and glorious event ordinarily follows the earnest and fervent prayers of God's people. It has long been regarded as an indication of good. It has long been esteemed as a sign, that the Lord is about to rise and build up Zion.

Another ground for expecting peculiar spiritual blessings, is the efforts of Christians to persuade the impenitent to seek the Lord. In seasons of great spiritual languishment, it has been recommended to Christians to call on the name of the Lord, and earnestly to invoke his interposition. And the saints have too often regarded this as the only means in their power, and the only weapon by which the strong-holds of iniquity can be successfully assailed. And hence, abandoning all other means of changing the spirit of the times, they have prayed for a revival of religion. This, like all other projects, where a part only of the means have been used, has often failed; and after praying much for the special influences of the Spirit, they have become disheartened, and have almost ceased to plead for the salvation of souls. But when, in humble reliance on God, when with hearts kindled at the altar, they attempt to persuade men; when all the members of the household of faith endeavor thus to perform their duty; then does the system, which God has appointed, become complete. Then have we reason to believe, that the blessing of God will copiously descend, and that plants of righteousness will spring up in abundance, and grow with luxuriant rapidity. Yes, brethren, when we shall feel confident, that in a spirit of prayer and humble reliance

on God, you shall labor to convince others of their alienation from him, of their need of justification through the blood of Christ, and of sanctification by the Spirit, then shall we expect to hear the inquiry, What shall we do to be saved? proceeding from numerous hearts, overborne by a sense of their guilt—and the song of deliverance, from tongues newly dedicated to the Lord.

I have now attempted to show you some of those things, which evince that the Lord is about to confer on a people peculiar spiritual blessings. Permit me, then, to ask you, What is your condition? Do you see amongst you any of these indications? Do you see anything which would cause the heart of a devout man, deeply overwhelmed with a view of the moral dreariness of the times, to become cheerful? Could he collect evidence, that the Lord is about to favor our Zion, and assign as a reason for his assertion, "The people take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof?" Or would his eye, as it moved around over these habitations, discover nothing which indicates a divine, a heavenly blessing? Or would he find as much perplexity, as did the man of God, who was brought to a valley full of dry bones—and as he walked around and surveyed the ruin, was asked, "Son of man, can these dry bones live?" and, seeing no indications of life, replied, "O, Lord God, thou knowest!" And when, in the moral world around us—in a world dead in trespasses and sins—no cry is heard, and no movement seen, and no breath emitted, and no pulse beat, ought we not to awake, and discharge our duty? Is it not time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain down righteousness upon us? Is it not time to manifest an interest and a delight in the means of building up the city of our God?

"Awake, thou that sleepest, and call upon thy God; it may be that he will hear us, and we perish not."

SERMON XXXIV.

THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST WITH HIS PEOPLE DESIRABLE.

2 Timothy iv. 22.—"The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit."

This passage was originally a prayer of Paul, for Timothy, his own son in the gospel, and a minister of the grace of God, as set forth in the gospel. In the circumstances of this young servant of Christ, this prayer must have been exceedingly appropriate to his condition. What can be more necessary to one, who is employed in studying the word of God, who is solemnly charged to ascertain its meaning, and to lay it before others, both privately and publicly; who is to guide inquiring souls in the way to heaven, to promote the sanctification of the saints, and to stand at their dying beds—and who, in all these circumstances, is to be prepared for his work; what can be more desirable than constantly to enjoy the presence of Christ? If there are any individuals, who, above all others, need constantly to experience the thing implied in the passage, "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit," they are those who are sent to teach the glad tidings of salvation, and to entreat men, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. All who desire the ministry, which Christ has established amongst them, to be useful, and wise, and successful, ought frequently to pray, "*The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit.*" In no other way can they reasonably expect the blessing of the Almighty on their own souls, or the souls of their children, or on those of the individuals by whom they are surrounded.

Nor is it less important in respect to their own individual piety, their growth in grace, and their preparation to go into eternity, that the Lord Jesus Christ be with their own spirits.

This will appear, I. From a consideration of the inquiry, "What can we do towards the acquisition of a sanctifying knowledge of the scriptures, unless the Lord Jesus Christ be with our spirits?

It is possible to attain to an extensive acquaintance with the doctrines and duties of revealed religion, without any sanctifying effects. This is manifest in all our intercourse with society. We often meet individuals, whose knowledge of the Bible is both minute and comprehensive, who are able to state and to defend the truth with greater force and power than almost any of those who are really Christians; and yet their hearts are not submissive to Jesus, and their lives are plainly at variance with his government. It is not difficult to obtain an intellectual view of the things which God has revealed; nor is it easy to acquire those spiritual views which are connected with the highest interests of the soul. Men have read the scriptures, and wondered why they had not those cheering and heavenly views which others have obtained; and after reading and studying them much, all the while rejecting the presence of Christ, and undervaluing all supernatural preparation of the heart, they have wondered and perished. If we would have those spiritual views of God's truth, which are requisite to a right and holy improvement of his word, we must pray much, that *the Lord Jesus Christ be with our spirits;* that he would be with them, not to reveal new truths, but to open our souls for the reception of those which are already revealed; and that he would prepare our hearts for the reception of them, and for the production of the peaceable fruits of righteous-

ness and holiness unto eternal life. It is because the truths of the word of God have been only intellectually and carnally received by some, that they are so quickly rejected. It is because the spirituality of his ordinances has not been clearly perceived and fully felt, that they are soon abandoned. The words of Christ, *rightly apprehended*, "They are spirit and they are life." But how can they be rightly apprehended? How can they be spiritual, and capable of guiding to spiritual life, unless through the presence and power of our Lord Jesus Christ? In no other way, except by the presence of Jesus, can we arrive at a purifying and sanctifying knowledge of the word of God.

II. The importance of praying, *the Lord Jesus be with our spirits*, will be manifest from the necessity of his presence in our devotions.

It is not uncommon for an individual to go alone to call upon God; and after continuing some time every day for many months, in what he calls prayer, he gives over the practice, and ceases to call upon God in secret. He feels that all secret prayer is a mere form, and utterly useless to those who thus call upon God.

Nor perhaps is it less common that individuals establish the practice in their families, of meeting morning and evening, and calling on God. After walking in this manner for months, and sometimes years, the family altar is demolished, and no incense is offered morning and evening unto God. They feel that prayer in the family is all a matter of form, and a usage, which in no respect is a blessing to those who attend upon it.

Nor perhaps is it less common to see individuals in the church, and in the prayer-meeting, put on all the forms of devotion, and for a time appear remarkably devout; and after a little time, they abandon the appearance of praying on such occasions, and perhaps also,

the assemblies of the saints. Ask them why is all this? and they will tell you, that they regard all these things as mere form. And even if they do not make this reply, they feel that they have not enjoyed the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is unquestionably the true ground of the difficulty. This is the reason why so many, at all times, and in every region into which Christianity has spread, have been found to abandon prayer in private, in the family, in the social meeting, and in the church. It is because they have not had the spirit of religion. Once they had the *form*, but not the *power*. At length they cast off the *form*, which, without the *power* was so troublesome; and in some rare instances, profess to have the *power* without the *form*. Thus separating what God had joined together, and which, taken separately, have never been found of any value.

To prevent either of these inconsistencies, and to honor God with our bodies and spirits, which are his, we ought always first of all, to pray, *the Lord Jesus be with my spirit*. The presence of Christ, and his moving and controlling influence, are requisite in all our devotions. This alone can cause our prayers to go up before God as a sweet savor. This alone can cause our own souls to be satisfied, and lead us to persevere unto the end. This alone can call down the blessings of heaven on ourselves, or our brethren, or our impenitent friends; and this alone will finally bring us home to Mount Zion.

III. The importance of praying for the presence of Christ, is manifest from its influence on our intercourse with the impenitent.

They are not careless observers of our conduct. They estimate our actions, not by the principles according to which they weigh those of the individuals who make

no such professions;—they are always looking to see whether our doings accord with the principles which we profess, and which we declare to have come down from God. Amongst these principles, they think much of that, which requires us to be like Christ. In this respect, they are not blind spectators of our doings. They connect external actions with internal feelings and principles. They know that the prayer which is not in its nature humble, cannot be according to the scriptures, nor to the Christian profession, nor to the example of Christ. They know, that the alms which are given for the sake of display, are not given according to the will of Christ. They know, that an address to the impenitent, which is not tempered with Christian sweetness, and affection, is not of Christ. They understand, that the proclaiming of the terrors of the Lord, if it be not accompanied with such feelings as characterized our Saviour's address to the city which had killed the prophets, and stoned those who were sent unto it, is far from according with the Spirit of Jesus.

And they know, too, that the pretence of great inward resemblance to Christ, which does not make its possessor externally like the Saviour, is groundless. They know, that whatever pretensions of internal peace may be set forth; whatever claims of internal sweetness, and heavenliness, may be uttered; they know that if these are not attended with such deeds as those of Christ, they are not from him. They know, that there is a false peace, a rejoicing that is not good, and a confidence that shall finally fail. They know, that there are those who cry, "*peace, peace,*" when danger is approaching. They never dissever the external conduct from the internal feeling. They, as well as others have learned, that from the heart the mouth speaketh, and the hands move. And it is impossible to make them believe, that

there can be anything of the Spirit of Christ within an individual, which does not make him externally like Christ; which does not set him to relieve the distressed, to pity the sick, to toil for the salvation of men. They know, that *mere internal* feeling, or affection, bears no resemblance to Christ; for his heart, his love to God and to man, burst forth in great and unceasing efforts, and prayers, for this object.

Now, if we would be useful to the impenitent by whom we are surrounded, we must have the Spirit of Christ within. We need then to pray, that *the Lord Jesus Christ would be with our spirits.* We need his moving influences. Are we indeed raised from spiritual death by his power? Are we dependent on him for our sustenance in spiritual life? And shall we not invoke his presence? Do we desire to set an example such as Christ set, and to have such an influence as he shed around him, and to cause the mite of our moral power to fall into the current of that which our God, and the Lamb, and all the saints, have poured forth on an ungodly world? And shall we not desire, that *the Lord Jesus Christ would be with our spirits?*

IV. What can we do in our intercourse with the church, without the presence of Christ?

In the vows which we have voluntarily assumed, we have pledged ourselves to maintain Christian intercourse with the members of Christ's visible family. But how can this be done, unless *the Lord Jesus Christ be with our spirits?* How can we constantly cherish those feelings, which will flow forth in sincere, and earnest, and affectionate efforts for the promotion of Christian graces? It is not hard to exhort a company of those who are professedly the children of God. It is not hard to call in question their piety. How can we love them? How can we pray for them? How can

we sympathize with them? It is no difficult thing, without the Spirit of Christ, to call them *cold, frozen, dead.* Some individuals seem to suppose, that if they have bravery enough to make this declaration before the face of the individual, or the church, to which it relates, there is no sin in the transaction. But is it a mitigation of murder, that an individual shoots another in open day, rather than in thick darkness? Is it not rather a proof of his hardihood in crime? No, brethren, there is in this course so much of resemblance to the old accuser of the brethren, as to put no obscure mark upon him who adopts it, of being a child of the evil one. The Lord Jesus Christ is not with the spirit that does such things as these. He never was found calling the whole school of his apostles, hypocrites. He would kindly say to them, "O ye, of little faith." He expostulated with them, but always as his children. He fed them with food, calculated to strengthen and to encourage them. The same spirit was manifest in the apostles. And hence, we are commanded, "to hold up the hands that hang down, and to strengthen the feeble knees, and to make straight paths for our feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed." It was never the direction of the Almighty to decry, denounce, or discourage the feeble members of his flock, but carefully to nourish and cherish them. And hence, we are commanded, "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye; but not to doubtful disputations." This promiscuous censuring of a church, is a step which ought but rarely to be taken: and then only after solemn consideration, and prayer, and by those appointed by divine authority for that purpose.

The ways in which Christians are to show the spirit of their Master, is by love, not by antipathy; by en-

treaty, not by threatning; by encouragement, not by condemnation. And how can this be, unless the Lord Jesus Christ be with our spirit? Let me speak freely to you, brethren, and say, that in your intercourse with one another, and in your conversations respecting one another, there ought universally to appear to be the meekness, the kindness, the Christian affection, which are requisite to a rapid growth of the Christian character. And here there is great need of the presence of Christ with your spirits. There is need of much prayer for this gift. No other gift is more desirable amongst us, than that which will lead us *kindly*, *tenderly*, *affectionately*, and *earnestly*, to promote the *welfare*, the *growth in grace*, and the *salvation* of all who, in *covenant with us*, profess to be going towards heaven.

V. What can we do in sickness, without the presence of Christ?

There are periods in the life of almost every man, when his strength fails, and disease preys upon his system, and death seems to stare him in the face. He is called to turn off his eyes from houses and lands; from occupation and gain; from friends and relations; and to fix his thoughts on the struggles of dissolving mortality, and on the cold grave. In such an hour, every thing earthly retires from his view. This world appears small, insignificant, and worthless. O, then he needs some higher, some more elevated hope, than anything beneath the sun can furnish. He needs a hope, which is an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil. I have known an individual, who had been exceedingly sinful in his life, and who repented not in his last days, and who drove the tract distributor from his house, and who could even be profane in the near approach of death; I have known such an individual die with apparent

peace. There is such a thing as saying "peace, peace," when there "is no peace." There is such a thing as an expectation of future and eternal peace in an individual, when there remaineth for him an awful wo. The hope of the wicked shall fail. There ought to be a careful discrimination respecting our future and eternal condition. No other building than that which is reared on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, will stand. All those which are erected on the sand, will be swept away. And when, in the house of disease and approaching dissolution, we think of the readiness of the human heart to be deceived, and of the power of him who transforms himself into an angel of light, to deceive and to destroy, *shall we not need the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ?* Shall we not need him to be with our trembling spirits, when they approach the grave? And shall we not need, not merely the opinion that he is at that moment sustaining us, but also the evidence of months and years, during every day of which we have walked with God, and had "The testimony of our consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in this world?" O, shall we not need the sweet remembrance, that Jesus has been with us, and delivered us out of many troubles, and caused our trembling feet to stand on the rock Christ Jesus, in every period of our lives! This every one knows that he will need, in his journey down into the dark valley. Why not now, therefore, pray daily, *the Lord Jesus be with my spirit?* Why not endure as seeing him, who is invisible, and as being seen of him? Why not yield your body, soul, and spirit forever to him, to be moulded according to his heavenly will?

From the subject, we learn the reason why so many are fluctuating in their religious characters.

It is because *the Lord Jesus Christ is not with their spirits.* When we see individuals, who, a few days ago, were full of religion; who were, during some meetings, overflowing with zeal; and during a few days, seemed to exceed all others in their regard for the salvation of men, and for the advancement of saints in piety; who were ready to weep and to shout; and who, after a short period of time, are found to be mingling in the follies, and the sports or the amusements of this world, or perhaps promoting them, though not ready entirely to participate in them; then we are forced to conclude, that *the Lord Jesus Christ is not with these spirits.* There may be something in them which they call religion, but it is a widely different thing from the religion of Christ. There may have been remarkable effects upon the nervous system, but no operation of Christ on the soul. The grand reason why so many engage, on one day, in acts of devotion and in cries and tears; and perhaps on the next, or some successive day, are altogether concerned about some worldly convocation or amusement, is, because there is no true spirit of religion in them. Our Lord Jesus Christ was immutable. He never was subject to such fluctuations. Nor are those with whose spirits he dwells. Their course is always onward and upward. They do not seem to suppose, that a few days of extorted earnestness in religion are sufficient to satisfy the Almighty for an abandonment of him during an equal or a greater number of days. No; they feel that all their time is the Lord's, and that they *must glorify him with their bodies and spirits, which are his.*

The subject shows, why there is so little effort for the salvation of the impenitent amongst us.

It is because the Lord Jesus Christ is not enough with our spirits. How can two walk together, except they be agreed? The Lord Jesus is earnest for the conviction, and conversion, and salvation of sinners. For this he came down from above. For this he suffered; for this he died. For this he intercedes with his Father. From the first information which we have of him, and of his exertions, to the last authorized report that has ever been brought back from heaven, we learn, that he is totally absorbed in seeking the salvation of men. And if this be not true of us, it is full evidence that we are not agreeing with Christ, and do not walk with him, and that he is not in us, and does not dwell with us; for, "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself so to walk, even as he walked." He does *so* walk, or his profession is *untrue*. He does so walk, or the Lord Jesus is not with his spirit; and Christ will say unto him, at the last day, "*Depart!*" Brethren, if we find in ourselves no concern for the impenitent, it is sad proof that there is *none of the Spirit of Christ within*, and that we have no experimental acquaintance with the "Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world."

The subject explains some facts, which we have long witnessed, but have not understood.

It explains why so many, who have named the name of Christ, do not appear to be Christians.

It explains why so many, who occasionally appear to be Christians, are generally without any evidence of piety;—*The Lord Jesus Christ is not with their spirit.*

It explains why so many are changing their religious views and feelings, while they do not appear to wish to abandon religion itself;—The Lord Jesus is not with them.

It shows why the impenitent have so little respect for the Christian character amongst us;—The Lord Jesus is not with us, as a church.

It shows why, when so many persons in the church and around it, profess to be full of faith and love, there are few or none converted.

It shows what is necessary to a genuine revival of religion;—*That the Lord Jesus be with us.*

It shows that all who are not laboring for one, seeking for one, and praying for one, are without Christ;—*He is not with them.*

SERMON XXXV.

GOD OUR HELPER.

PSALM xlvi. 5.—"God shall help her, and that right early.

THIS passage is a part of one of the most noble songs contained in the oracles of God. It describes the perplexities and dangers into which Zion was cast, and the enemies which she had to encounter. "The heathen raged." "The kingdoms were moved." All the enemies of Zion seemed to have prepared for her overthrow. On every side they seem to have gathered around Jerusalem, and to have laid the most effective projects for her destruction. They seem to have intended to cut off all supplies of bread and water from the city, and by fear, by starvation, and by war, to have destroyed Jerusalem with her temple, and the saints with their

worship. In this emergency, the devout men of those days sought the Lord. They declared their confidence in him. They caused Israel to sing, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." In anticipation of the exclusion of water from the city, and of the natural thirst to which they might be subjected, they looked up to God, the fountain of all refreshment, and expressed their confidence in him, and their reliance on him for all blessings. They left themselves in his hands, and felt that he would supply all their wants. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early." Such was the confidence of the pious Israelites in the protection of the Lord, in whom they had trusted, and unto whom they had gone to tell their exposures and their dangers. Such were their anticipations of deliverance from the evils, at the approach of which, their hearts had been filled with trembling, and their minds led to seek the God of their fathers.

Nor are the devout, in this generation, so free from exposures to spiritual attacks, as to have no need of divine aid. On every side there are hindrances to their progress in godliness. Within their own bosoms, there are obstructions to their growth in grace. It not unfrequently happens, that those newly adopted into the family of Christ, are at first entirely insensible to the difficulties of walking in the way of righteousness. They are disposed to feel that the battle has been fought, and the victory won. No more do they expect

the internal depravity of their nature, to rise and exclude them from the joys of communion with God. No more do they anticipate that their thoughts will be delighted to dwell on the things which God has forbidden. No longer do they expect their affections to be lingering around the practices and objects which God has prohibited. No more do they suppose, that they shall be inclined to serve the creature rather than the Creator. No more do they expect Satan to tempt them, and to draw them away from God, and duty, and the pursuit of eternal glory. Before them, the voyage to everlasting rest, seems to be over tranquil seas, aided by prosperous winds, and a serene sky. Early in the Christian career, no apprehensions are entertained of the constant care which all the children of grace continually need. The idea, to one newly born into the kingdom of Christ, that at every step he must struggle with his own carnal propensities, or with the allurements and fascinations of this world, or with the enticements of those who still continue to be transgressors, or with the resistance of the prince of the power of the air; the idea that his whole course, if successful, is a warfare, in which there is no discharge, rarely falls on his mind, and is never admitted to his heart. Previously to actual trial of the Christian course, he cannot be made to understand the necessity of a continual conflict with the enemies of his salvation, nor his need of divine aid at every step of his progress. Yet however little he may be disposed to believe in the statement which any judicious Christian may give to him, of the trials through which he must pass, and the assistance which he needs, it is still true, that in every part of his course he is dependent on God for help. No one of the ancient saints, is known to have ever advanced by his own unaided strength in the way of piety. No one of them

has ever ascribed his progress in grace, at any time, to the unaided exercise of his own faculties. With them, it is a predominant, an universal characteristic to ascribe all their advancement in graces, all their victories over their own corruptions, all their conquests of the world, the flesh, and the devil, to the help of the Lord their God. At all times they profess to need this help. In this respect they do not differ from the saints of every period of the world. It is a fact acknowledged by all the people of God, at all times, that for progress in religion, they are dependent on God alone; that for victory over their enemies, they must rely merely on him. This fact, so little relished by the natural heart, is uniformly taught in the scriptures, and pressed home upon the consideration of all the children of God. It must indeed be admitted, that they are sometimes slow to learn it; and there are periods in which the great body of a church, and sometimes of the Christian community, seem to cast off the feeling of their dependence on God, and to rely chiefly on their own skill, or virtue, or piety, or zeal, for the promotion of the cause of Christ. And in this way, it often becomes necessary for Jehovah himself to arise, and to make them feel the need of his Almighty arm.

And II. It is God's way in these circumstances to make them sensible of their dependence.

When the children of Israel had grown to such an elevation as to feel independent of God, he said, "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early." This passage declares, that when his children have so far departed from him as not specially and deeply to feel their need of his aid, he will depart from them, and cease to pour favors upon them; and thus he will make them to feel their need of his help.

When they see that in respect to his gracious aid, he is gone; when they know, that in this particular the heavens over their heads are as brass, and the earth under their feet as iron, then will they begin to seek the God of Jacob. Then will they know that they have transgressed against him. Then will their hearts begin to feel their transgressions, their tongues to acknowledge them, and their souls, in the depths of their affliction, will begin to seek the Lord. Let it then be remembered, that it is the design of God, in returning from his works of grace, to make men sensible of their departure from him, and to cause them to seek his face. This is the declared design of the Most High. And if, in these circumstances, they admit the chastisement, and humbly inquire after him, they shall find mercy. In very ancient times he told his people, if, under such an abandonment of God, "They shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me; and that, also, they have walked contrary unto me, and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then, their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept the punishment of their iniquities: then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land. The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her Sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them; and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity; because, even because they despised my judgment, and because their soul abhorred my statutes; and yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them, for

I am the Lord their God. But I will for their sakes, remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt, in the sight of the heathen, to be their God."

The fact, that God will have those who come acceptably to him, to feel their own vileness, and extreme need of his help, is taught not only in this passage, but in other parts of the scriptures; and hence, it is said, 1 Kings viii. 38, 39: "What prayer and supplication be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands towards this house: Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest."

Here it is plain, that to come acceptably before God, we must know the plague of our own hearts. We must understand our own sinfulness, vileness, and worthlessness before God. These, He designs to make us both know and feel, both appreciate and deplore, both confess and pray for pardon, before he will hear and grant us relief. Let it, then, be engraven on every soul, that the Lord requires you to understand your own guilt, deeply to feel it, sincerely to mourn over it, before he will graciously listen to your cries, and stretch forth his arm for your relief.

III. This is requisite to make men seek his assistance in prayer.

If men enter into a secret place, and call upon God, ought they not to carry with them a sense of their need of the things for which they pray? If they mingle their voices in social supplication, ought they not to be deeply impressed with a view of their need of divine help? And how wretched, how sinful must the transaction be, of going to God and uttering before him petitions

for things which, though they be important, yet their importance is not felt, nor their value appreciated! But when God rises up, and causes all around to feel the need of his gracious presence; when men are made to know, that they are altogether in his hands, and that his indignation is awake against them; when they feel, that unless he pardon, they are lost; unless he heal, they shall die; unless he save, they shall go down to perdition;—when all this occurs, then the cold, guilty wanderer awakes. He sees his need of help. He knows from whom only it can come. With eyes cast downwards to the ground, his heart cries after God. With trembling, in view of the eternal scene to which he is hastening, his soul seeks the God of his fathers. With anxiety for the immortal beings around him, he looks upwards, and pours out his soul unto the Father of mercies, for their salvation. No other impression, than that of the aid of the Almighty, is requisite to break up the slumbers of sin; to awaken Christians to diligence, that they may be found of God in peace; to excite them to inquire what manner of persons they ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness. No other impression, than that the aid of the Almighty is requisite to excite sinners to flee from the wrath to come, and to lay hold on the mercies of the living God—is capable of producing that earnest supplication, that longing for divine interposition, which will call down the blessing of the living God. To this state the Christian must be brought, if he would offer unto God acceptable, and availing prayer. To this condition must his soul be introduced, before he can have confidence that his prayers will go up as sweet incense before God, and call down blessings, like showers of rain, on himself, on his brethren, and on the impenitent. Now, when the children of God in any place are made deeply to feel

their own need of sanctification; whenever they are ready to say individually, I have departed from God; I have sinned; my own guilt presses heavily on my conscience; *my* sins have gone up like mountains over my head;—when they are ready to cry, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean"—"Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow:"—when we hear such expressions bursting forth from the lips of any individual, then we conclude, that God will help him right early. And, when many hearts are thus affected, and many bosoms thus agitated by a view of their own corruptions, of their departures from God, and of their partial violations of their covenant—when many in a church are thus deeply affected, mainly by a view of their own unfruitfulness, and unworthiness in the sight of a holy God—when, in the humiliation of their souls, they go before Jehovah to plead, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness;" "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities;" "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me: Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me: Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me by thy free Spirit, then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee:"—when we shall hear such prayers in the house of God, and in the family, and when these characteristics shall be found in all your private supplications—then, and not till then, shall we believe, that the Lord hath touched your hearts, and made them fit for the reception of a blessing. Then shall we expect to see in your lives the fruits of righteousness in abundance. We shall expect grace from above to descend like the dew of the morning, and like the early and the latter rain. We shall expect to see seed, which for many years has been scattered here, spring up and

grow, and bring forth fruit like the garden of the Lord. Such will be the effects of coming into that humble and lowly condition, required by the relation which Christians sustain to the Lord their God. They must feel, that all their help is from him. And if they will not practically admit it, and act upon this principle, then God will leave them to go on in their own fruitless way. In the expressive language of the scripture, he will say, "I will go and return unto my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: In their affliction, they will seek me early."

This is the state in which individuals must be to meet the favor and receive the grace of God. This is the condition to which the saints in any church must be brought, before they can receive the favor of the Most High, and behold his blessings descend on the wanderers from God, by whom they are surrounded.

And now, brethren, permit me to bring this subject home to your own bosoms. I wish not to address you in the corporate capacity of a church, or a society. We are very apt to look around on the church, and to estimate the degree of piety in it, by the degree of engagedness in some of its members; and the probability that each of us shall arrive at heaven, seems to be graduated by what we deem to be the state of the church, rather than by the condition of our own souls. Thus, we delude ourselves by the idea, that a portion of the piety, which we see around us, belongs to us, and will in some way cause us to be admitted to heaven. We do not seem to suppose, that the piety of others will be imputed to us; but we expect, that by some mysterious operation on us, it will excite us, and move us, and make us acceptable to the Lord our God. Thus we deceive ourselves —we expect heaven while we are maturing for eternal sorrow. To prevent the possibility of thus deluding

you, I would go and stand at the door of every man's heart, and ask, not the congregation, nor the church, but each one of you as an individual—Do you think, that your heart is in the condition, which has been shown to be requisite to your own growth in all the qualifications for heaven? Do you feel, in your own bosom, that need of assimilation to God, which the scriptures require? Do you anxiously pray, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean—wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow?" Do you feel your need of the grace of God to renew your inward man day by day? Are you inwardly pressed by the weight of your own infirmities, and failures, and guilt, more than by any other consideration? Do you inwardly tremble, lest your example may have ruined many souls around you? and in the depths of your distress, are you looking up to God for mercy? and are your eyes watering for his smiles? Are you anxious, that his Spirit may renovate your souls, and by his mighty power subdue all around you to the dominion of Jesus? If these be your individual feelings, then you have reason to infer, that God will help you. And if these be the feelings of a large portion of the members of the church, there is reason to thank God, and take courage, for the "set time to favor Zion is come." The Lord will appear in his glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their supplication. In such circumstances, God will help his church, and that right early.

From all the preceding remarks it is plain, that the application of the promise of God to help any portion of what is denominated Zion, is altogether conditional, so far as our knowledge of it is concerned. It cannot, indeed, be maintained, that the care of God over his chosen people, and his determination to bring home to glory a multitude, whom no man can number, is con-

ditional. God has promised his Son a seed to serve him. But, at the same time, it must be borne in mind, that the promises of God to individuals and to churches can be inferred only from circumstances. These circumstances consist in the possession of certain characteristics. These are faith, repentance, humility, prayer, and universal obedience. Without the exercise of these, it will be as impossible to receive the blessings of his children, as it was for the rebellious descendants of Abraham to receive the things which were offered to his seed, according to the promise. As the apostate sons of Jacob were not regarded nor treated by God as having a right to the favors thus promised, so faithless Christians and churches have no right to the things promised to the obedient. Our right to the help of the Lord, our interest in his promises, is, then, to be judged by our fidelity to him. Without this, we are removed beyond the conditions of his gracious grants, and are exposed to all the abandonments which are threatened to those who are openly his adversaries. We cannot expect his help. We ought not to look for his favor.

The subject gives grounds of strong confidence to those who trust in the Lord, and do his will.

You are included within the limits of that redeemed people, of whom God has said, "I will help them, and that right early." Your faith in Christ identifies you with those who, in all periods of the world, have shared his favor; your love, and humility, and obedience, prove you to belong to that blessed company, on whom the Lord will cause the richest of his blessings to descend. Those who are thus united to Christ, and who are obedient to his commands, have ample grounds for rejoicing in him. God will help you. He will extend his merciful hand to deliver you, as often as trials threaten to overcome you. Whenever, in your

mortal pilgrimage, you are called to meet and to endure perplexities and afflictions, then know that God hath not forsaken you; know that his design is to draw you nearer to himself, and to bring you into a heavenly union with him. He intends to withdraw you from every way of danger, and to cause you to find shelter under the wings of his eternal protection. Go, then, with confidence to your Father in heaven. Commit all your ways unto him; and he shall cause you to triumph over all the power of the adversary, and to stand at last on Mount Zion, with songs and eternal joy.

The subject shows the impenitent, that their danger is exceedingly great. The difficulties which lie in the way to glory are so great, that it requires an Almighty arm to overcome them. Some of the immortal beings, by whom you are surrounded, have gone to the Saviour, and secured his help in the day of adversity. They have the characteristics to which he has promised his assistance and grace. But you have them not. To you, no help is promised in the day of calamity. No aid is pledged in the hour of trouble. No deliverance in the times of anguish. Alone you stand. Against you are arrayed all the powers of the ungodly, and all the stratagems of the world of evil spirits. You are in extreme danger. And yet you have no God to help you,—no Saviour to deliver you,—no refuge to conceal you!

SERMON XXXVI.

THE REPENTANCE OF PETER.

LUKE xxii. 32.—"And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

I HAVE in former times remarked to you, that a great share of all the offences which are committed in churches, occur in the immediate vicinity of the Lord's supper. To what this is owing it is not easy to determine; but the fact itself no careful observer will deny. This is seen in the family of our Lord himself. Soon after receiving the bread and the wine, which were to commemorate the sufferings that he was to endure, and even in the time when his soul began to be exceeding sorrowful, and he began to pray, in view of his sufferings, "Save me from this hour," the eleven disciples, unable to watch one hour, fell asleep. On that same night Judas, one of the twelve, betrayed him for thirty pieces of silver; and that his treachery might not be detected, he saluted the Saviour with a kiss, while a company bearing swords and staves were directed by this signal to seize him. On that same night Peter, too, who presumptuously declared, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee," was so agitated by the voice of a damsel, as to deny with an oath that he knew the Saviour. All these things occurred on the night of the Lord's supper, in the family of our Lord himself. This is a specimen, in some respects, of what is found to occur in these times amongst those who have entered into covenant with the Lord. But why is it, that in times when every heart ought to be full of affection, and

every member to be an instrument of righteousness—why is it, that such transgressions occur? To this very difficult question, I reply, that Satan seems to be peculiarly sensitive respecting the Lord's supper. It is the celebration of the greatest defeat which he ever suffered. It is the memorial of the overthrow of all his hopes and expectations derived from the apostacy of man. There is nothing so mortifying to the whole congregation of fallen spirits, as the remembrance of the blood, by which poor, perishing humanity is enabled to overcome the effects of the apostacy, and to arrive at the mansions prepared for the people of God in heaven. And hence Satan puts forth all his efforts to bring Christ, and him crucified, and every memorial of him, into reproach. This was evidently the intimation of the Saviour, when he charged his disciples to watch and pray, lest they should enter into temptation. And in accomplishing this end, the evil one searches out all the hypocrites in a church, and stirs them up to unholy acts. Thus, on this occasion, he entered into Judas. He searches out all the fluctuating and unstable, and endeavors to induce them to act inconsistently with truth and righteousness. Thus he assailed Peter, for our Lord said to him, "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." And in some respects he seems on this occasion to have affected them all, for when Jesus was seized, they all forsook him and fled.

To say no more in this place of the son of perdition, it is desirable to show what effect Satan desired to produce on Peter. He was told, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." The idea, which the Saviour here intended to convey, is not that Satan intended to purify Peter. He was never anxious for the purification of any of the people of God, nor charged with any serious effort for such a purpose. On

this supposition he would be divided against himself. His object was quite a different one from that of purifying his soul. The object of Satan, in this case, is not illustrated by the process of cleansing grain, but by a circumstance merely incidental to it. As the grain in the sieve is tossed from one side to the other *violently*, and is thus constantly agitated, and not permitted to be at rest in any condition, so, Satan intended to agitate the mind of Peter, and to shake his faith in Christ. That this was the precise point of agitation is evident, first, from the prayer of the Saviour: I have prayed for thee, that thy *faith* fail not. And it is evident, secondly, from the precise point of agitation, for when Peter saw his Lord arrested, and held as a prisoner, his confidence in him vanished, and he denied that he knew him.

It is often argued by those, who do not carefully study the scriptures, that Peter had not been regenerated when he committed this offence. But such an opinion is contrary to the whole current of the New Testament, as well as to particular passages in it. Our Saviour once previously asked his disciples—"Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?"—plainly implying, that all except one were his children. On another occasion he said, "*Now ye are clean, but not all*," referring also to him who should betray him. All suspicions, that he had not previously been regenerated, are utterly unfounded in fact. Peter had for years been a disciple of Christ. He was peculiarly fluctuating in his temperament; and though possessing qualities which fitted him to be occasionally useful in a high degree, his instability has placed him far lower on the list of worthies than the amiable John, or the persevering Paul. Like Reuben, it seems to have been written of him, "UNSTABLE AS WATER, THOU SHALT NOT EXCEL." The denial of the Saviour, the fluctuation in his course concerning

Jewish customs when among the Galatians, and some other particulars, seem to have stamped his character with an unenviable instability. It was not the regeneration of his soul, and its transformation from darkness to light, that the Saviour here intended by the expression—"when thou art converted." It was simply his returning from one of those partial apostacies into which, owing to his want of steady faith, he fell.

And here it is worthy of remembrance, that the departure of the ancient saints from the way of righteousness, was probably in no instance of long continuance. They had trials and temptations, and sometimes were hurried into transgression; but as soon as they were informed of their wanderings, they returned with deep and thorough repentance. They seem not to have needed rebuke on rebuke, and effort on effort, to turn them from the ways of transgression. It was those, who suddenly perished and that without remedy, that. being often reproved, hardened their necks. But when David was rebuked by the prophet, his whole soul was moved, and he quickly repented before God and his people. And when Peter denied his Lord, and the Lord turned and looked on him, "he went out and wept bitterly." The difference in this respect between a genuine Christian, and one who is destitute of evangelical faith, is, that the Christian has a heart prepared to turn; and when his errors, or sins are set before him, he forthwith turns from them. In this sense of the word he is immediately converted. This is often done by the instrumentality of the brethren. In this sense James said to the Christians of his time, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins." But he who is destitute of this faith, whatever

his external condition be, does not quickly turn, when he is admonished. Though convinced, that he ought to turn, he does not turn immediately. He thinks there will be some more urgent call, some greater impulse, some stronger inducement, some better example, some general movement—and then he shall turn. And if by any effort he is awakened, his whole appearance is that of a nervous excitement, rather than that of deliberate and steady obedience. Thus the Israelites, who in the wilderness were discouraged on the return of the twelve spies, bringing a report of the land of Canaan, and uttered their dissatisfaction with their condition, and felt that they could not go to possess the promised land, and had no means to subdue it, at length became roused from their discouragement, and determined to go, whether the Lord would go with them or not. And their course of murmuring against the conduct of God, and their unwillingness either to go at his command, or to stop where he bid them, caused their carcasses to fall in the wilderness.

True Christians turn, when the Lord commands them by his word, or by his servants, who bear his word. The difference between them and the impenitent man, whether in the church or out of it, consists in the fact, that they turn at once from sin; while he thinks he shall turn at some future time, or in view of some other circumstance. But David, when admonished, did not look on the wicked around him, and say, we are all dead, and we must awake together. There is Joab, the captain of my army, the murderer of Abner, when he turns, together with the other sinners around me, then I shall repent of the murder of Uriah. Nor did Peter say, we are all out of the way: ten of the disciples have forsaken the Lord and fled, and one has betrayed him. No; neither David nor Peter made the least reference to the

unhappy religious condition of any other individual. Whether all the rest were alive, or dead, does not seem to have entered into their thoughts. As individuals, they had enough to do with their own sins. They had to repent, whether others repented or not. They confessed, whether others confessed or not. They returned to their duty, whether others returned or not. And had they waited for others, it may have been doubtful, whether they would not have slept in sin, till the day of perdition.

Having sufficiently, for the occasion, explained what is meant by the phrase, "when thou art converted;" and having also shown, that in the case of genuine saints, it occurs as soon as they are admonished of their errors, I proceed to declare the duty of those who are thus converted. This is described in the phrase, "Strengthen thy brethren."

This does not imply, that we should weaken them. There is a tendency in some, who in these days think themselves to be reclaimed from the error of their ways, and to be revived in the life of godliness, to take a course which weakens, instead of strengthens the brethren. In some places it has become so powerful, as to lead those who think themselves to be revived, immediately to separate themselves from those with whom they had vowed to walk, to break their covenant with God, and with their brethren. This is a covenant-breaking generation. And if there be one thing above another, for which Jehovah may be justly offended with those who profess to be his people, it is the fact, that invoking him as a witness, calling angels and men to behold their vows, they turn away, and act as if no such covenant had ever been made, or God ever called as a witness to the transaction. This evil has infected all parts of our religious proceedings, till a covenant

made with God and his people, is becoming a by-word, a hissing, and a reproach. No other promise is esteemed so lightly. If, in the transaction of ordinary business, men were as careless in regard to their notes and contracts, as in religion many are in regard to their holy covenants, all confidence between man and man would cease, and the community would be put into a dreadful confusion. But, in the church, men enter into covenants, which are far more formal and solemn, and yet feel at liberty to act as if no covenant had been made. But in ancient times, it was not so. The covenant of the Lord amongst the ancient Israelites, could not be broken. And even the enlightened heathen regard it as exceedingly criminal, to violate a covenant which has been confirmed by religious rites. Amongst the worst of men—amongst fornicators, deceivers, backbiters, and haters of God—are covenant-breakers classed by Paul in the first chapter of Romans. It is not the duty of an individual, who has been reclaimed from the error of his ways, to break a covenant, unless his covenant bind him to perform some sinful transaction. A covenant with death ought, indeed, to be broken. An agreement with hell, ought to be disannulled. But those covenants in which men avouch the Lord Jehovah to be their God, and Christ to be their Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost to be their Sanctifier, and the law of God to be the rule of their lives, cannot be of this nature. Their object is to promote godliness. Nor can this object be gained except by a sacred keeping of this covenant. Nor can it be lost to those who fear God, by the circumstance, that some have unworthily taken it upon themselves to vow in the same words. Of about sixty churches formed under the influence of Mr. Davenport, one hundred years ago, of individuals who broke their covenant with the churches of which

they were members, because there was so little piety; of these sixty churches, formed in Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey, only eight are said now to survive, and these are exceedingly feeble. The individuals, who thought themselves to be so righteous that they could not conscientiously continue with the ordinary churches, became, in those which they constituted, exceedingly unhappy, and unsuccessful, and disorderly. To burst the bonds of a covenant with God and the saints, because some individuals in covenant with us are not as spiritual as we think they ought to be, is a dangerous procedure, and has always been found to involve its perpetrators sooner or later in ruin. To weaken the brethren, either by deserting them or by reproaching them, is no part of the duty of one who is converted from the error of his ways.

That the brethren may be weak in faith, in love, in humility, and in some departments of Christian duty, is clearly implied in the command to strengthen them. But this cannot be done by abandoning them. How, then, can it be accomplished?

To this I reply, 1. By being always in the place, and punctually discharging the duty which the Lord requires of you, according to your covenant.

When an individual professes to have been born again, we expect to see him relinquish his worldliness, his vanity, and his sins. Instead of fixing his attention on the world, and giving his time to the circles of ungodliness, we expect to find him in the place of prayer; even though it be not crowded. We do not expect to see him arrive in the midst of the devotions: He is there early. He comes not, because others come. He is not absent, because they are absent. Something else than a mere collection of human beings brings him to the house of God. Like the psalmist, he says, One thing

have I desired of the Lord, that I might dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to see his glory and to worship in his temple. As the hart panteth after the water-brook, so panteth my heart after God. This is the feeling and the habit of one who is born of God. Now, can we expect an individual, who is converted from error, or from partial apostacy, to be different from this? Will he not be anxious to go to the place of prayer? Will he not be early there? And will he not be likely to take his brethren by the hand, and to lead them to the place of devotion, rather than to wait and see whether enough assemble to warrant his attendance? And will not this very punctuality tend to show a relish for religion, a love for Christ, and an enjoyment of the presence of Jehovah? Will it not lead others to awake—give them new strength and courage in doing the will of the Lord?

The brethren may be strengthened, 2. By the spirituality of those who are turned from any particular course of sinfulness.

Spirituality consists not merely in speaking concerning religion, nor yet in any peculiar and affected manner of handling this great subject, but in the whole life.

The spiritual man lives above the world. He regards the favors of Providence as useful for the present life, and in no respect to be despised. He understands and feels, that they are to be received with all thankfulness. But at the same time, he practically feels, that all these things will soon vanish. Fully to understand what the spirituality is, which is demanded of those who are thus converted, it is desirable to consider the course of Peter, and to meditate on the considerations which occupied his mind. On the morning of the resurrection, we find him running to the sepulchre; and those who possess

the same spirit will be found eager to meet Jesus in his earthly house, on the morning of the day which commemorates his resurrection. On the day of pentecost, Peter was found declaring Christ, and *him crucified*, and calling on men to repent. In his 1st epistle, he is found ascribing blessing unto God, and saying, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

He spoke of the trial of their faith: "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold, that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, whom, having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

He spoke of the manner of their redemption: "Forasmuch as ye know, that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you: Who by him believe in God, that your faith and hope might be in God."

In his 2d epistle, he charged them to be diligent in the cultivation of all the Christian graces. He commanded them to give all diligence to "Add to their faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to

patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

He referred them to the great day, and reminded them of its sudden approach: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

And his very last exhortation to them was, "Beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Such was Peter, when he was converted. He had a soul alive to the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. He remembered how he had fallen; and anxiously warned his brethren to beware, lest they also should fall from their own steadfastness. He set before their minds those mighty, those affecting considerations, which are calculated to move them to be continually diligent in doing the will of the Lord. Such was Peter, and such should all be, who after a partial apostacy return to their first love. His conversation pertained to those great subjects, which set heaven and the way thither distinctly before the eyes of men, and urged them to walk in it.

3. The brethren may be strengthened by our meekness, and other mild graces.

No other thing so poorly befits one who knows that he has been a wanderer, as, first, a confession; and, secondly, a rebuke of his brethren in this immediate connexion. It becomes him, who is conscious that he has wandered, and has been reclaimed by the grace of God, to be very humble, and meek, and lovely in all his addresses to others. It will not do for him to break forth in all the boldness of one whose path has been as the shining light, "Which shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day." It will not do for him to deal without mercy with the faults and sins of others. He must deal with them in pity. He must show compassion. Did our Lord himself rebuke Peter with violence? Did he not rather look upon him, abstaining from all reproaches? And it was *that look*, that *tender*, that *mild*, that *touching look*, which caused Peter to go out and weep bitterly. And the manner in which God reclaims offenders, is by his mercy, forbearance, and grace. Our Lord Jesus Christ, too, has pity on those who are tempted; for having been tempted, he knows how to sympathize with the children of men when they are tempted. And this sympathy should be felt by all, who, having been turned from the error of their ways, go forth to the work of reclaiming others.

4. Nor should this work of strengthening the brethren, be a matter of mere contingence. It must be undertaken systematically. He who should leave the care of his store, or the cultivation of his field, to mere contingence, would soon learn that it will bring him to ruin. I know we are apt to say, that Providence is a sufficient guide. But they who leave either earthly or heavenly things to mere contingence, are so far from following the leadings of Providence, that they are

trusting to improvidence, and all their expectations will fail. Good, in such cases, may possibly be done by accident or mistake; but it will be thus done, if done at all. Each Christian should adopt a system of doing good, and carry it out in all the branches of a Christian life. Especially should he undertake a system of watchfulness over the spiritual condition of those by whom he is surrounded. He should frequently visit them, and pray with them, and inquire respecting the condition of their souls; that he may lead them in the way of truth and righteousness, and assist in reclaiming them when they wander.

5. He should strengthen them, by meeting with them in circles for prayer.

Though the Christian depends for grace entirely on Jehovah, yet, in the wise counsels of God, he has appointed that his people should assemble, and unitedly seek his face in prayer and supplication. And when all who name the name of Christ assemble, of one accord, in one place, how sweet, how refreshing, how joyous the interview! But if one who professes to have been turned from the error of his way, is not there, they feel their strength diminished, their hopes chilled, and their joys turned into sadness. And here let me say, that except for urgent reasons, such an individual will not be absent from the circle of prayer. His soul will be with those of the people of God. His voice will be there. His prayer will be there. His faith will be there. And he will encourage them by his example.

6. He will also encourage them, by praying for them. This the spirit of Christianity and the example of Christ require.

7. He will encourage them by his conversation. In ancient times, they who feared the Lord spake often to one another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it.

Christians have the same hope: the same anticipations: the same glorious objects are before them. They are fellow-travellers to eternity. They have a common inheritance beyond the grave. It is infinitely more glorious than all besides. They will delight to meditate on it; to speak of it; and to encourage each other in their journey thither.

SERMON XXXVII.

DURABLE RICHES.

MATTHEW vi. 33.—"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

THIS passage contains one of the most important directions which has ever been given to the children of men. The Saviour had been speaking of the anxieties which are found to exist in the human heart, respecting the future periods of life. He had said, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on." This passage, however, in the present meaning of words, denotes an entirely different thing from that which the Saviour intended to communicate. He never intended to tell, nor did he ever tell men, to take no thought for the morrow, in the sense which these words convey. Though the words themselves, at the time of the translation of the scriptures, undoubtedly conveyed the meaning of the original text; yet, by the changes which have

occurred in the meaning of words in the English translation, they convey a meaning very different from that which the Saviour designed. All that the original words can possibly be made to mean, is, *Be not anxious—be not distressed "for your life*, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on." It is only the anxiety which poor mortals are apt to indulge, respecting the coming days of their present existence, and which is apt to preclude attention to the great concerns of the soul and eternity—it is only this anxiety that is to be dismissed. All that agitation which withdraws the attention from God, and duty, and eternity, and fixes it on the work of preparing for the unforeseen contingencies of this life, to the neglect of the immortal soul, is to be abandoned. While faithfully performing the duties of to-day, we are not to be so occupied in thoughts about to-morrow, as to overlook the salvation of God, or fail to accept it. This great salvation is to be sought in preference to any other future good. "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

I have here occasion to say, that the word "*first*," in the original scriptures, does not always mark the order of time. Nor, indeed, does it in our own language. We say, the first man in a town, or state, or nation; but we do not mean the oldest man; but the one who has the greatest amount of property, or influence, or character. We require an individual, in transacting business for us, to make a certain thing the first object to be accomplished. But we often mean simply, that it ought to receive the principal share of the attention, and be performed, whatever else is omitted. Now, this is evidently the meaning of the Saviour, in the passage under consideration. The command, which he here uttered,

when properly interpreted, is, "*seek mainly the kingdom of God and his righteousness.*" The phrase, "*kingdom of God and his righteousness,*" is used to denote reconciliation to God, justification through the righteousness of Christ, and all its blessings in this life and that which is to come.

I have long noticed, that men are acting in this world as if the command of the Saviour were reversed. The lives of many around us seem to indicate, that they have understood him to say, "seek mainly the world, its favors, and its wealth; and all the blessings of religion, including all the delights of eternity, shall be added unto you." If, indeed, you profess to take the scriptures as your rule of life, and yet are engaged in the supreme pursuit of the things of this life, what are we to think respecting your view of this and similar passages of the scriptures? Are we not to suppose, that some misapprehension exists respecting the command itself? Is it not true, that you have supposed, that Christ himself has suffered you, or required you to devote your attention mainly to these mortal scenes: and that, in some manner not now understood by you, the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness shall be conferred upon you? These are questions which I desire to press home upon the heart and the conscience of every individual, and especially upon all who have named the name of Christ, and yet are walking in the ways of the world. Have you not misunderstood this passage? Have you not, on the whole, supposed the order of religion and the world, by some process, to have been reversed? That no one of you may longer indulge this practical error, I once more bring before you the command of him who spoke as never man spake, *Seek mainly the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.*

But you may inquire, why the Saviour makes this

requisition on those unto whom his commandments come? Do not the things of this world claim our attention? Are we not required by the circumstances of our being to devote a great share of our attention to the things of this world? To this I reply, that there are tendencies within us to set our affections on the world, and to exclude thoughts and efforts from the great scenes to which we are hastening. There are around us, also, the most ensnaring fascinations, which draw our attention from the way in which we should go; and hence, it is necessary to counteract those excessive tendencies to the things of time, which are so apt to strengthen around us, and to involve us in final and irretrievable perdition.

That we may understand that there is an importance in the requisition of the Saviour, *let us compare the kingdom of God and its blessings, with the possessions of this world.*

I. In respect to their certainty.

The possessions of this world are uncertain in respect to their attainment.

Few ever acquire a profusion of the things of this world. Of the vast number, who, in the early periods of life, undertake to acquire what is often denominated a *fortune*, or even *wealth*, not many ever arrive at the amount which they undertook to gain. Through some miscalculation, inattention, misfortune, or some other cause, they fail to gather the collection of this world's goods, which they had earnestly desired and labored to obtain. Amongst a host of poor, famishing people, whom I once met, scarcely one was found who did not say, "I never expected to come to this degree of poverty; I once expected to be rich; I once had cheering prospects; but they have vanished; and here I am, afflicted and destitute." However much we may fix our affec-

tions on the things of the world, and toil with confidence to obtain them, there is no certainty that they can be secured. However much we may now possess, there is no security that it may not depart. A contagious disease may prey upon our flocks and our herds. A fraudulent neighbor may have given a defective title to the soil which we cultivate; or the lightnings of heaven may consume, in a moment, the labor of years. Of these and many other contingencies, which may sweep away all that you can gather together on the face of the earth, you are solemnly forewarned in the word of God. There is no security that you can gain the possessions of the earth; and even if you gain them, there is reason to fear that they may be suddenly taken away.

Not so with the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Here there is no uncertainty. There is none in the attainment, and none in the security, after they are attained. "They that seek me early," saith the Holy One of Israel, "shall find me." Of all that have ever come to Christ, he has sent none away. There is not to-day an impenitent individual, on the face of the whole earth, who can say that he has come to Christ, according to the conditions of the gospel, for salvation, and was rejected and sent empty away. There is not a spirit amongst all the myriads of the family of Adam, who are reserved in chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day, that can reproach the Saviour, and declare, that his word has been violated, that he has refused to grant him salvation. These blessings are not liable to be lost. Whatever of grace is begun in the heart, is carried forward to its completion. Of those who are renewed in the inner man, the scriptures declare, that they "are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." And Paul declares, "I am persuaded, that neither life, nor death, nor angels,

nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." There is, then, perfect security to all who are in Christ Jesus our Lord. All who seek this inheritance, receive a kingdom which cannot be moved.

II. The possessions of this world are unsatisfactory, while those which pertain to the kingdom of God are in their nature satisfying.

It is a truth sustained by all human experience, that there is nothing of all the things beneath the sun, which is capable of meeting and filling the desires of man. Men have acquired vast possessions, and yet they had not enough. Men have made great advances in knowledge, and have left far in the rear of themselves, all by whom they were surrounded; but this did not satisfy them. Men have acquired extensive influence, and yet they pined for something which they did not possess. Men have risen to great power, wielded the destinies of the known world; levied and commanded vast armies; reduced all opposition to their plans and wishes, to abject servitude; and yet they were not satisfied. Even a mighty man is said to have *wept*, because he could find no more regions to conquer. No one, of all the earthly things which it has fallen to the lot of mortals to possess, has ever been found competent to fill the desires and the aspirations of one born for immortality.

O, there is something in an immortal spirit, which the earth with all its varied productions, and the sky with all its splendors, can never satisfy.

But while all the works of nature, and all the embellishments of art, cannot meet the desires of an immortal soul, nor satisfy its aspirations, there is enough in the kingdom of God and his righteousness to fill it forever

with fresh and heavenly delight. In these, there is presented to the mind and to the affections the unfathomable glories of the Godhead. There are the wonders of redeeming love. There are the glorious deeds of that Spirit, which, triumphing over all our unworthiness and all our sins, has visited us with mercy, and conferred on us all the gifts of his grace. There are the angels who have never departed from the living God; and there are the saints gathered out of every nation and kindred under the whole heaven. There the excellences and glories of the divine character are undergoing a perpetual development, and filling every holy bosom with eternal delight. Nor is this all. The taste of the mind itself is so altered, the relish is so changed, as to delight in these things, and to be satisfied with the nature of this employment. It is so changed, as to be forever pleased with dwelling on these splendid, these eternal themes of meditation and delight. In comparison with these, all other scenes and all other employments sink away into relative non-existence. Every thing seems to be concentrated in this grand and glorious manifestation of the Almighty.

III. It is dishonorable to God, not to seek mainly his kingdom and righteousness.

The things of this world are designed simply for our use in passing from this to our eternal state. They are, indeed, illustrations of the power and goodness of the Lord our God. In them we may see the beauty, and behold the glory of Jehovah. But if, instead of regarding them merely in this light, we suffer ourselves to be entangled in them, and are thus prevented from going to the Lord our God; if our affections are so obstructed by them, as not to ascend and dwell on Jehovah; if we love the creature rather than the Creator, who is God over all, blessed forevermore; is it not dishonorable to

Jehovah? Is it not reproachful to him, to set a higher value on the things which he has made, and which are only illustrations of his power and goodness, than on himself, the great Author of all these mercies?

On the other hand, it is plainly honorable to God, to have his subjects set their affections on him. It is a declaration to all other beings, that he is the centre and the fountain of all goodness, the spring of all delights. It is a testimony to the divine excellence which is known above, which is felt in hell, and which is effective on the earth. Nothing else in the conduct of his creatures so tends to exalt the character of the MOST HIGH, in the view of all his intelligent subjects, as the constant and devoted service of those whom his hand has made, and his forbearance sustains in being. Is it not honorable to an earthly governor, that his subjects are devoted to his service, and appreciate his integrity? And is it not also honorable to Jehovah, to have the beings, whom he has formed with such exalted and noble faculties, to esteem him and love him above all other beings? Who, then, will not mainly seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness?

IV. The things of this world are temporary—those which God requires us to seek are eternal.

There is no one of us who needs to be informed, that the objects by which he is surrounded are rapidly going to decay. Every year the trees are clothed with foliage; and every year they also are divested of it. Every year the plants shoot forth in the fields, and the flowers in the gardens; and every year they also decay and die. Every year a portion of the inhabitants around him go down to the dust, to rise not till the heavens be no more. Every year, also, his possessions are undergoing some modification; or if the possessions themselves remain unchanged, his relish for them and his delight in them

is modified, till he loses all appetite for those things which were once so delicious, and all capacity to enjoy. Every thing beneath the sun is changing. Mutability is enstamped on them all. And the time is rapidly coming, when the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, the stars shall fall from the sky, the powers of heaven be shaken, and the elements melt with fervent heat. There is a period, when all by which you are now surrounded shall have passed on to decay. Nothing earthly shall survive the ruin.

But amidst this concussion of the elements, there is a kingdom which cannot be moved. It is the kingdom of God. There is something which is immoveable. It is the inheritance which pertains to such as fear God and keep his commandments. Whatever else may perish, this shall endure. By two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, *they* can have strong confidence who have fled, to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel. Those who "put their trust in him shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved."

V. It should also be remembered, that there is a time after which the kingdom of God and his righteousness cannot be found, even though it be sought anxiously and with tears.

We are told in the scriptures of some, who, after having long rejected God, shall call upon him, but he will not hear them—shall seek him early, but shall not find him. The scriptures command men not to grieve the Spirit: This implies that he may be grieved. They command men not to quench the Spirit: This implies that he may be forever hindered from returning to regenerate and save him, who thus repels him from his heart. They also represent God as declaring, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." They also

speak of some as having committed the unpardonable sin. From all these passages it is clear, that some, before they arrive at the threshold of death, have rendered it impossible that they should ever obtain the kingdom of God. They can never be pardoned. They can never be saved. Their day of grace is gone. No prayers, no tears can ever move the Almighty to remove from them the condemning sentence of his law, and deliver them from final ruin. This conviction is often fastened on the mind of a poor mortal, before he arrives at the gates of death. O, how many, like *Francis Spira*, have died with a living conviction, that upon entering eternity they should fall into hell!

And yet how many more have lived with an impression, that in some manner now unknown to them, they should obtain the kingdom of God and his righteousness! And yet upon going to eternity, they may have found themselves to be wholly unprepared; and, instead of entering the kingdom of heaven, may have been turned into hell with all the nations that forget God! And how many are there, who, instead of mourning over their transgressions here, have gone into eternity, there to mourn over their delay, and to say, "How have I hated instruction, and despised reproof!" "O, that I had been wise, that I had considered this, that I had thought on my latter end!" "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

Let it not be supposed, that even if the kingdom of God and his righteousness be sought, there may be a neglect or an abandonment of the ordinary occupations of life. Though God has promised, that whatever is requisite for food and clothing shall be provided for his children, yet this is not to be accomplished by miracle. No; it is by securing in his disciples the industry which is requisite to sustain themselves, or by raising up friends

for them in times when they would otherwise be reduced to want. And this he has uniformly done for his people. Once, said an aged and venerable monarch, once I was young, and now I am old; "yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." While you are seeking the kingdom of God, and walking according to his commands, in the discharge of all the duties of life, you will not be left to pine away or to die in want.

Let me, then, my immortal hearers, exhort you to seek *mainly* the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Jehovah requires it.

The Lord Jesus Christ requires it.

The Holy Spirit requires it.

The angels desire it.

The church prays for it.

Your eternal condition also demands it.

SERMON XXXVIII.

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

Acts xvii. 31.—"Because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained."

Few men are apt sufficiently to consider their latter end. Absorbed in the cares of this world, influenced by a regard for its possessions, or swayed by the current of popular opinion, they move forward without duly regarding the scenes into which they are every hour rushing. The attainment of whatever is requisite to the sustenance of their lives, to their personal ease, or influence, attracts their attention, and prevents them from pondering the path of their feet. But while thus walking in their own ways, or perhaps carelessly following a multitude to do evil, a record of all their thoughts, their feelings, their motives, and their deeds, is made. They still advance in life, and still the record is enlarged. They forget the action of their minds, as well as those of their members; but the record above is not faithless. It retains, without obliteration, whatever is once committed to it, and will at length disclose all these forgotten transactions to the view of each individual. However the motives of these actions may be concealed from our own view, by pride, by passion, by obstinacy, or by the example of those with whom we associate, they can be concealed no more. They must stand forth, in all the glare of day, before the eyes and the conscience of the offender.

I. The time when this shall be is not unfolded. Like many other of the most important events, that occur in

the history of an immortal being, the day of its occurrence has not been declared; yet we are sure that a time has been appointed, not indeed by men, nor yet by angels. Nor is it a matter of agreement between any of the created beings, which inhabit the universe, and their Creator. This day is fixed by God, for "He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness." Its arrival will suddenly occur. No indication of its approach shall agitate the dwellers on the face of the earth, or warn the souls already in eternity of its coming. Without premonition it shall arrive. The day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night, in which the heavens, being on fire, shall be consumed—the earth and all things that are therein shall be burned up; but of this day knoweth no man—no, not even the angels of God. Now, though we do not know the day, we do know that we shall all behold it. However uncertain we may be respecting any future day of those which may intervene, we are sure that we shall behold the last, the great day of all, "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." There you, who hear me, will be; and it behooves you *now* to take heed how ye hear. There I, who speak, shall be; and it behooves me to preach no other preaching than that which the Lord hath commanded. There all the generations of men shall stand. There every angel from above shall come and be judged. There every apostate angel, "reserved in chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day," shall be brought. This will be such an assemblage as this world never saw. It will be a convocation, whose magnitude and whose depending interests shall be sufficient to awaken sensations the most affecting and unutterable. It will be a convocation too great to be called by men. Such a day and such a convocation are worthy of the appointment of

the Almighty. It is fit that an archangel should go forth with the trumpet of the Most High, to call the armies of the living and of the dead, of angels and of devils, to this grand convocation. It is not a human court, but the court of the Almighty. It is not the day of man, but the day of the Lord; for though he hath not yet declared, he hath appointed it; for the apostles affirm, "He hath appointed a day, *in the which he will judge the world in righteousness.*"

Here, then, it becomes us seriously to consider the manner in which we shall be judged.

It is proper now to say, that this judgment will be a very different thing from that which men are wont to form in the ordinary intercourse of life. Even the most honest men in this world are liable to mistake. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart." With the most serious and scrutinizing efforts, it is sometimes impossible to penetrate the motives of men, so far as to discern their characters. But while this is impossible with men, it is easy for him with whom all things are possible. His eyes penetrate our very souls. He weighs our motives. He understands our thoughts afar off. His omniscience detects whatever of thought, of feeling, or motive there may be in us; and there is no possibility of mistake. Nor is he swayed in his decisions by the opinions of men. He has commanded us "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God." By this rule he requires us to abide. And he commands us, not to "follow even a multitude to do evil." I know that instead of adhering steadily to the commands of God, the old Roman maxim, "Vox populi vox Dei"—the voice of the people is the voice of God—is often held forth as our guide. This heathen maxim may be winked at by Jehovah, in those regions which have not

received the light of revelation, but will not be tolerated amongst those to whom the word of God has come. God will not judge the world by their conformity or dissent from the opinions of those amongst whom they dwell; and he has explicitly told us, that "though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished."

II. The rule according to which we shall be judged, is a righteous rule. Omitting now all reference to the rule by which the heathen shall be judged, it is desirable to confine our attention to those principles which shall be applied to our own actions. Here we cannot but know, that the law of the Lord is the grand instrument by which our actions shall be weighed. The great inquiry there, will be, whether we have loved the Lord with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our minds, and with all our strength? It will not then be sufficient, that this has been done merely in name, and in the decencies of a Christian profession. The inquiry will not be for the declaration of its existence, but for the reality. It will not avail to an acquittal there, to say, "Lord, have we not eaten and drank in thy presence, and cast out devils in thy name?" but whether there has been an attachment to the holiness, the justice, the righteousness, and the mercy of God; whether these in the Almighty have called forth the warmer affections, and enkindled a heavenly flame in the bosom; whether they have been mingled with that fear, which fills all heaven, and causes the demand from millions of holy beings to be heard, "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord God Almighty, for thou only art holy?" whether it has awakened that veneration which causes men to walk humbly with God; whether it has produced the lowliness of spirit, which leads every devout man to say, Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? whether it awakens a loathing of ourselves, and an abhorrence

of our own spiritual condition; whether it takes off our affections from the world, and fixes them on Jehovah; whether we have lived as if the things beneath the sun were only temporary and inglorious, in comparison with those above; and whether our love to God has been operative, drawing our affections upwards continually to him; not suffering them to gather around, not merely the material form of an idol, but those earthly objects which obstruct the rising of our affections to the Most High; not allowing us, in ordinary conversation, nor in the appearance of devotion, nor in our religious covenants, to take the name of God in vain; not permitting us to violate his holy day by the transaction of ordinary business, or by lingering around the places, and meditating on the objects in which we ordinarily engage; but in all respects causing us to regard and to "call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable." These are the points by which our profession of love to God will then be tested, and according to which our destiny will be fixed.

Nor will our regard for the members of the human family be overlooked in this transaction. Not only will our actions be weighed by those commandments, which pertain to our conduct towards those around us, but also to our feelings. That the external breaking of these commandments will call forth the censures of the Most High, is admitted by all except infidels. But too rarely do we remember, that these feelings are as distinctly seen, and as certainly held by God to be criminal, as the actions which proceed from them. There is not an unrighteous emotion in any heart, which he does not behold, and for which he will not call us to a solemn account. There is not a plan of iniquity in any bosom, which he will not bring forth and show to the world in all its atrocity at the great day, and on which he will

not pronounce and inflict an adequate punishment. Nothing is concealed from his sight. Nothing is remote from his view. Nothing escapes his remembrance. And in declaring the character of these actions and feelings, the great principles of righteousness will be the only guide. He will judge the world in righteousness. There will then be no turning aside to the demands of supposed expediency. Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne. In the face of a universe there will be an impartial decision. Not the whole congregation of devils, now reserved under darkness unto the judgment of the great day, will have any influence to turn him that sitteth on the throne, from a holy and a just decision. Not the whole collection of the ungodly can move him to pervert judgment. Not the whole assembly of those, who have deceived themselves and others with a show of religion, will be found competent to turn the Judge of all the earth from a righteous application of his law to the hearts and lives of the vast assemblage before his throne.

But the passage suggests, III. The inquiry, Who is the Judge of the universe?

To this I reply, 1. That men are not the judges of the concourse who shall assemble at the great day.

For, the amount of knowledge requisite to judge and award the destiny of men, angels, and devils, is infinite. All the thoughts, feelings, words, and deeds, of all the beings in heaven, on the earth, and in hell, are to be investigated. And with these God alone is acquainted, for the scripture says, "And thou Lord only knowest the hearts of men."

2. God has actually appointed our Lord Jesus Christ to be the Judge of the living and the dead. Amongst men it is common to have several judges on the same bench, and in the same cause. This is owing to the

imperfection of human nature, and to the limited capacities of man. On this account it is highly desirable to unite together men of knowledge and practical wisdom, that they may consult together, and suggest to each other any important view of the subject, which might escape a single individual. But what suggestion of this nature can our Lord Jesus Christ need? Is he deficient in knowledge? What practical wisdom can he derive from the children of men? And is it possible, is it conceivable, that any of the beings who are to stand before the Son of man to be judged, shall be elevated on that occasion to be the judges of the earth? We are indeed taught, that "the saints shall judge the world;" but there is no intimation, that this relates to the judgment of the *great day*, nor to the universe of beings which shall then assemble. These passages may, indeed, relate to the period yet to come, when all the earth shall know the Lord, and when true religion shall be so extensive, that all the judges of the causes in this world shall be saints; but they cannot mean that the saints shall be the judges of the assembled hosts at the great day; for God has assigned this work to that man whom he hath raised from the dead, even to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Consider, now, who it is that shall judge the world in righteousness. We are accustomed to view the Saviour chiefly in his state of humiliation—as coming to this world, suffering and dying for men, and as sitting at the Father's right hand, to grant repentance and remission of sin. We have been wont to meditate on the babe of Bethlehem, over which a miraculous star stood, and around whom the astrologers of the East stood to offer their homage: But now, every vestige of infantile feebleness will have disappeared; and he will be clothed with glorious strength and majesty. We have been

accustomed to think of him as a child standing before the teachers of the law of God, both hearing them, and asking them questions: Now, before him who was then a child, will be gathered all the teachers of religion in the universe, to answer his inquiries, and to hear his decision on their character. We have been accustomed to think of him as so destitute of all the conveniences of this life, that while the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, he had not where to lay his head: But now, we shall behold him as the Possessor of all things, the Controller of the universe, the Lord of myriads of angels, who stand around him delighting to do his will. We have been wont to contemplate him as being in an agony in the garden, and as sweating as it were great drops of blood: But now, we shall see him coming in the clouds of heaven, and sitting on the throne of the universe, exalted far above all fear of suffering and death from the hands of the puny, trembling children of men. We have been wont to think of him as arraigned before Pontius Pilate and Herod, and the chief priests, to be ordered away to crucifixion: But now, Herod and Pilate, and all his persecutors, shall be seen waiting before him, to give their account and to receive their doom. We have been wont to meditate on him as suspended on the cross, as groaning, and as dying: But now, he will be elevated on a throne of judgment to pronounce on the character and the eternal condition of every member of the human family. We have been wont to think on the darkness, which hung over the land from the sixth to the ninth hour; on the quaking of the earth, and on the rending of the rocks, when the Saviour expired: But now, "the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth and all that is therein shall be burned up." We have been accustomed to look to Jesus as our Mediator with the Father: But the work

of mediation will then have ceased. He will not appear to do the work of a mediator; but that of a judge between the Father and his offended subjects. He will not come to invite, and allure men to his service; but to declare, and fix their eternal destiny. He will not appear to intercede with his Father to spare the guilty, and to save them; but to be the Administrator of divine justice, and the Awarder of their eternal doom.

The Being before whom we must appear, is one whose kind regards for the human family will be unquestioned. No other being in the universe has done so much for man. No other spiritual being has stooped so low, that he might save those who had incurred eternal wrath. No other one has so long and so unweariedly toiled for their temporal, their spiritual, and their eternal welfare. So disinterested has been his regard for a world that lieth in wickedness, that none can suspect him of injustice. For many thousands of years he has watched over the fallen sons of Adam. He has wept over the wicked as he wept over Jerusalem, and said, "If thou hadst known, even thou in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace: but now they are hidden from thine eyes." "O, that thou hadst hearkened unto my commandments, then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." These indications of tenderness characterize him, who on the last day shall come to judge the earth. And though in deciding on the characters of men, his decisions will be according to justice and truth, yet there will be no violence, no unnecessary sternness, no wanton cruelty. When he shall pronounce sentence on the wicked, it will be with a tenderness corresponding with that which led him to weep over Jerusalem, and to say, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?"

And yet we shall be judged—faithfully, justly, truly

judged. Every holy angel shall be judged. Every apostate angel shall be judged. Every saint shall be judged. Every sinner shall be judged.

There I, who preach, must stand, and give my account of all my feelings, my thoughts, and my deeds. There, too, I must give an account of the things which I have preached. There it will be known, whether I I have taught you the character of God and his holy law, with all its rewards and penalties. There it will be known, whether I have taught you the character, and work, and suffering, and death, and exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ. There it will be known, whether I have told you of the Holy Ghost, of his convincing and converting power. There it will be understood, whether I have declared unto you all the motives of religion, and pressed them home on your consciences. There it will be known, whether I have preached the preaching which the Lord hath bidden me. These things must be all reviewed at the great day; and an impartial judgment will be rendered respecting them. It is sweet and affecting to know, "that my judgment is with the Lord." In view of this great day, I would live, I would preach, I would warn and exhort all around me, to turn unto God, that they may be saved. I would not have this thought forsake my mind, neither a day nor an hour, till I finish my mortal career, and meet my Judge.

And if I must give an account respecting the things which I preach, ye also must give an account of what ye hear. The Saviour has charged you, to take heed how ye hear, and to let his truth sink down deep into your hearts. Brethren, it will not, at the last day, be found sufficient merely to have heard the word. Your improvement of what you hear will be demanded. And he has charged you, to "receive with meekness the

engrafted word, which is able to save your souls; and to be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straitway forgetteth what manner of man he was; but whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." It is this doing of the word which will enter into the examination by the Judge at the great day, and become the most important article of the whole inquiry. Ye who to-day fill the sanctuary—ye who are now in covenant with Jehovah—ye will be judged, not by the question, whether ye have heard the word of the Lord, but whether ye have obeyed it? Not by the question, whether ye have heard of Christ, but whether ye have believed in him? Not by the question, whether ye have been commanded to repent, but whether ye have repented? Not by the question, whether ye have vowed to be the Lord's, but whether ye are indeed his children? whether ye call on him in secret? whether ye call on him in your families? whether ye walk as children of the light? whether ye honor God with your bodies and spirits, which are his? and whether ye present your bodies, living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto the Lord, which is your reasonable service? Brethren, it is not a difficult thing to speak of the judgment. It is not a difficult thing to form some general view of that great day. But the personal trial—O, the personal trial—which you must all endure! No one of you can be *merely* a spectator. There you must stand. There the sincerity of your professions must be tried. There your hearts, with all that they contain, must be disclosed. Will not your

own reflections supply the rest? Need I tell you, that there is reason to fear that some of you will fail of eternal life? Far be it from me to single out any individual, or fix on any one the mark of reprobation. This is not my office. It belongs only to the Judge of the living and of the dead. But if, in every company of professed disciples of Christ, there have been some who were without grace; if, in the family of our Lord, there was one who went to his own place; if, among the ten virgins, *five* were found to have no oil in their lamps; what may we not expect to occur here? And O, how painful will it be, after having lived in the church of God below—after having hoped to go and dwell with the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven—how painful will it be to be met by Jesus, and disowned by him; and instead of being admitted to heaven, to be turned into hell, with all that forget God! And while I would bring these thoughts home to my own soul, and open my heart to their influence, I entreat you to look forward and consider your latter end; always remembering, that "God is not mocked; that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

And all who are to-day impenitent, are *entreated* to look back on their lives, and forward to the great day. "God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained." This is the great, the commanding reason why he calls on you to repent. What kindness it is in Jehovah thus to forewarn you of your latter end! These are only a few things in your future course, which he has deemed it necessary that you should know. Of these, two stand forth with special prominence. It is appointed unto all men once *to die*, and after death

comes the *judgment.* Though it might be delightful to you to live always on the earth, in the possession of health, and strength, and of this world's goods, yet it will not be possible. These bodies must soon moulder into dust. These souls must soon go to God who gave them, to give their account, and enter on their eternal destination. What preparation, then, will you make for this great occasion? What preparation ought you to make? Will you make the preparation which the Lord requires? Will you repent? Will you accept the Saviour? In full anticipation of these affecting scenes, I *entreat* you to stop—to consider—to repent—that your sins may be blotted out, and that you may be addressed at the last day, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord!"

SERMON XXXIX.

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

MATTHEW xxv. 32.—"And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."

You will remember, that I have recently called your attention to the fact, that the day is approaching in which we must all give an account of the deeds done in the body. I have shown you, that God "hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained." This day is the greatest of all days. It is fitting to the occasion, that it be appointed by the Almighty. It is becoming, that the archangel be commanded, on the morning of its arrival, to take the trumpet of the Most High, and go forth and summon the living and the dead; the angels that kept not their first estate, and those that are reserved in chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great convocation. Then God will judge them, not according to the outward appearance, but according to the heart. Then he will judge them, not by the principles of a *supposed* expediency, but according to the eternal principles of righteousness. Then the Lord Jesus Christ will award to them their eternal destiny; for the scriptures inform us, that he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. The extent of this separation is a subject which calls imperatively for your attention. We are wont to suppose, that some of the worst of mankind will on that day be separated from the rest, and sent

into eternal despair. We are apt to look at the heathen, and to conclude, that all idolaters shall be found at the left hand. But this class is far from being the whole of the throng which shall be found there. If to these we next add those who take the name of God in vain, these two classes do not complete the circle of those who shall stand at the left hand. If to these we add the Sabbath-breaker, we do not include the whole multitude of those who are there. If to these we add the whole catalogue of murderers, yet this does not complete the group, which shall stand trembling and waiting to be sent away into hell. And if amongst them we place the whole army of the licentious, still we do not arrive at the termination of the throng. Among these there yet stand the thief—*the false witness*, whether his testimony has been uttered under the solemnity of an oath, or in the thoughtlessness of ordinary narration. And were it consistent with the righteousness of Jehovah, *we would gladly*, for the sake of our love to humanity, say, O that these were all! But the adorable Jehovah, for the glory of his own name and the highest good of the universe, has decided that these are not all who shall stand at the left hand of the Judge. Many others, who suppose themselves to be candidates for immortal glory, shall be there.

I. Of these, one class seem to suppose that they have done no harm to man, and therefore that they shall obtain eternal life.

We often find individuals who seem to suppose, that their lives have been unblameable in their transactions with mankind; and, therefore, when they are exhorted to look forward to the great day, and to prepare to meet him who shall judge the world in righteousness, they manifest no anxiety respecting their condition. They even venture to say, "We have done no injury to any one

of the children of men. We have rendered to every one his due, 'tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear.' In the whole circle of our acquaintance, no one can complain that we have not done all that he had a right to demand or to expect." Though it is not to be conceded, that this can be strictly said of any human being, yet if it were literally true, it would not hence follow that the individual would find acceptance with God. Had he indeed rendered to every man his due, this would be a sound reason why he should be respected of men; but if he withhold from God what is justly due to him, how can he expect to be admitted to his favor? On what grounds can he conclude, that the Being, whom he has refused to serve and to honor, will place him at the right hand, and honor him with his favor? How can he expect that the Being, whom he has rejected as his Lord and King, and from whom he has revolted—how can he expect that he will, at the great day, say unto him, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?" Can he expect the Judge of all the earth to be guilty of such an inconsistency as this? Will he pervert judgment, and abandon truth, and do violence to his own veracity? No; it is unreasonable to suppose, that the Judge of all the earth will pronounce those to be faithful who are unfaithful, or those to be obedient who are disobedient. He will not deal with the wicked as with the righteous. Far be it from us to impute injustice to Jehovah. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne." And he will forever separate the unjust from the just—the precious from the vile.

But, II. Not only shall the immoral, and those who suppose they have done no harm to men, while they have neglected to serve God, but also those who sup-

pose themselves to be Christians, but are not reconciled to him, shall stand at the left hand. The decisive indication that such shall be separated from the righteous, is a failure *to love God.*

I know that it is exceedingly difficult to produce in any individual a conviction that he does not love God. Through all the ranks of wicked men, from the boldest transgressor down to him whose exterior is apparently conformed to the divine will, but whose heart is not right with God, it is hardly possible to find a human being who will not aver that he loves God. Whatever his course be, he is confident that he loves the Almighty. With the single exception of those persons whose consciences have been quickened by the power of the Holy Ghost, and who have seen the blackness of their own hearts, no one can be found who does not believe that he loves the Almighty. With this single exception, turn wherever you please, and put the inquiry to whomsoever you will, amongst the impenitent, and he will answer you, *that he sincerely loves the Lord.* But when you inquire for the evidence of this love, and weigh it in the balances of the sanctuary, it will be found wanting. And if it were confined to the professedly impenitent, our task would be comparatively diminished; and we should proceed to exhort those who acknowledge themselves to be without God, to repent and escape for their lives. But unhappily there are many who really believe themselves to be Christians, and yet have no love for God. Their condition will place them on the left hand of their Judge, and subject them to all the woes which are written in the word of God against them. They have no holy flow of the affections towards God. Their souls are not filled with ardent aspirations for his glory. There is no heavenly communion of the heart with him. The morning finds not the pure

incense of the affections going up to God. Mid-day sees no holy aspirations arise from the soul; and evening beholds no sweet savor, ascending and mingling with the affections of the angels above. The heart which thus fails to yield its best emotions to Jehovah, will eventually be placed at the left hand.

But if there be danger that there is no love in the heart, even of some who may suppose themselves to be friendly to Jehovah, it will be immediately asked, What are the indications of this failure to love the Lord? Many souls will anxiously listen to this development of the signs of their being without God in the world. It is impossible that they should be at rest, while a subject of such importance is pressing on their attention.

The first indication is a failure to think much of God. It is certain, that whoever ardently loves anything, will think upon it frequently and earnestly. Thus, if one love the world, he will think much of the world; and if one love God, he will think much of him. It is impossible but his thoughts should dwell upon him. Presented to his mind as Jehovah is, by every moving breeze, by every springing plant, by every rising star, and by the whole train of natural and moral phenomena around him, how can one who delights to love him fail to meditate on him? Surrounded by myriads of suggesting causes, he cannot fail to meditate much on the great and adorable Governor of the universe.

Nor, 2. Can one who loves God fail to speak respecting him. He will not, indeed, be apt often to tell how much he loves God, and how little his neighbors esteem the Holy One of Israel. True love is not apt to be captivated with itself, but with its object; and hence, while it is wont to overlook its own existence, it is accustomed to speak of that on which the affections settle. Love to God is not apt to be speaking of its own strength and

glory, but of the greatness, and majesty, and excellency of the Almighty; of his holiness, justice, goodness, and mercy; of his wonderful works; and of his transcendant condescension in revealing himself as the Father, the Friend, and the Saviour of lost men.

Nor, 3. Can one who loves God fail to obey him. Sincere affection leads us to meet the wishes and the desires of those towards whom it goes forth. It is ready to yield to every reasonable demand. And love to God will readily see that his commands are reasonable, and will call forth all the powers in obedience. Thus, they who love God will often think of him. They will often speak of him. They will continually strive to obey him. They who have not these indications of love to God, will stand on the left hand at the great day.

But there are other and more tangible indications of being placed with the wicked.

Of these I mention, first, Failure to pray to him in secret.

No child of God, in the possession of reason, lives without prayer. Of Saul of Tarsus, on his conversion, it was said, "Behold, he prayeth!" And so universal a characteristic of the regenerated has praying to God been, that it has been common, in some parts of the world, to designate the people of God as "the praying ones." No one can ever expect to see God in peace, who is not accustomed in secret to call on his name. All who neglect it must stand, at the great day, on the left hand of the Saviour. They that call not on the name of the Lord, give fearful indications that at the great convocation of the universe, they shall be separated from the people of the saints of the Most High God.

As a second indication of standing on the left hand, I mention a neglect to pray in the family.

That there may be infirmities in here and there an

individual, which preclude the possibility of calling on God in his family, is readily admitted. But these infirmities are fewer than we are apt to suppose. And it becomes those who are fully competent, without interruption, to attend daily to the ordinary business of life, to consider whether their neglect in this matter is not a fearful indication against them. Amongst those on whom David invokes the displeasure of the Most High, are the families that call not on the name of the Lord.

Brethren, there is a fearful neglect of this duty amongst us. You can sit with pleasure, and hear the sins of the murderer, the thief, the licentious, and the liar, declared and reproved, and you wonder why they do not flee from the wrath to come! Will you not then listen to your own exposures, and duly consider those marks, those fearful marks in yourselves, which portend coming sorrow? Will you not remove from you this sad indication? With earnestness, with alarm for the security of your souls, and for the removal of every indication of being found at last with the ungodly, I *entreat* every one of you to erect an altar in his house, and to offer thereon the morning and evening incense.

A third indication of standing at the left hand, is found in a failure to have a deep and operative interest in the disciples of Christ.

Those who love God, love also their brethren. He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen? They who suppose that they are accepted by God, while their hearts are alienated from his children, are candidates for the throng, which shall stand at the left hand, and go away into everlasting punishment. I know that men, when they desire to be free from such an argument as this, begin to allege, that those for whom they cherish hosti-

lities are not the children of God. Such a conclusion they are at liberty to form whenever the conduct of an individual is at variance with the law of God; but till this can be fairly established, there is no authority for such an assertion. Who has sought out a neighbor's heart, and set it before your eyes? Has he, who alone searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men—has he revealed to you what is *within* the bosom of your neighbor, and is *thus* excluded from your own observation? Let not, then, this pretence prevent you from seeing your own condition. The individual who does not love his neighbor, is in great danger of being placed at the left hand of the Judge. Some better reason, than any of those which are commonly assigned for antipathy, is requisite to deliver you from this doom. A failure to love your neighbor as yourself—to seek the peace of those by whom you are surrounded, to promote their welfare, both for this world and for that which is to come—will place you at a distance from the righteous, and cause you to go away into everlasting torments.

A fourth indication of being placed at the left hand, is a failure to govern the tongue.

Perhaps there is no other member which gives such unequivocal evidence of the state of the heart. It is almost safe to say, that the heart is as the tongue. There is no other organ, whose indications of the state of the heart, and of the condition of an individual at the last day, are so certain. When David inquired, "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" he was answered, "He, that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart—he, that *backbitith not with his tongue*, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor." And not only is abstaining from backbiting, an indication of preparation for heaven, but

indulgence in it is a special qualification for hell. Thus of the wicked it is written, "The poison of asps is under their lips." And James says, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things: Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed; and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God." What an affecting description of an unsanctified tongue! "Therewith bless we God:" We appear to pray, to praise, and to honor him with it. "And therewith curse we men:" We malign, contemn, and reproach men, who "are made after the similitude of God." "Out of the same mouth," saith the apostle, "out of the same mouth procedeth blessing and cursing! My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?" How clearly does the sacred writer here show, that the tongue which, though it may bless God, curses men, is far, far from the way to heaven! Whoever indulges it, gives clear indication of being a candidate for the left hand of the Saviour at the great day.

A fifth indication of being finally placed at the left hand, is found in a declining interest in the religion of the heart, and of the life.

It is not uncommon to find men, who once seemed to have a deep interest in the things of God; their hearts appeared to be alive to secure their eternal salvation; their lives seemed to be in accordance with the high and holy claims of the divine law: But at length the flame of their piety seemed to decline; their apparent love abated; they became but little interested in the things which pertain to salvation. And, though the garments of their piety were every day becoming more thin, and the chills of apostacy were advancing nearer and nearer to their hearts, yet their hopes were not correspondently on the wane. Though their evidence of being in the way to heaven had almost entirely departed, yet their expectation of eventually arriving there, was in no respect diminished. They seem not to remember, that "The path of the righteous is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." They seem to have forgotten, that *they only* who persevere unto the end, shall be saved. Or, they seem to suppose, that if they persevere in hope, while they neglect many prominent Christian duties, they shall at last be counted worthy to escape those things which shall come on the ungodly, and to stand justified at the right hand of the Son of man. But at that day they will find themselves to have made a woful mistake. They will learn, that they are of those who draw back unto perdition. And, instead of being at the right hand of Christ, they will be found standing on the left!

The subject suggests several practical inferences.

The separation at the great day will be a very affecting one.

Godly parents will be separated from their ungodly children, to meet them no more forever:

Godly children will be separated from ungodly parents:

Godly ministers from ungodly hearers: and

Godly members of churches from the ungodly.

This separation will be an eternal separation. Separations here are for a limited period—for a week, a month, a year, or a few years;—but there, they will endure forever.

These separations will be for unmingled good, or evil. Here, there is an intermixture of good and evil; not so in eternity. On the one hand, is heaven, with its everlasting songs, and its glories, and its freedom from pain and sin; on the other, there is hell, with its woes, its lamentations, its agonies, its despair.

The separation of the great day is begun in this world. The impenitent are all going the way to death. Those who, by faith, repentance, and general obedience, turn from it, have begun the separation which shall there be completed. And this separation will be made in view of the difference of character which existed in this world.

Why will you be separated—parents and children, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, members of the same church—why will ye be separated to meet no more? yes; TO MEET NO MORE FOREVER! And when the sun has set for the last time, and the last star has fallen from the spheres, then will the darkness of the universe, retiring from the region of the fields of light, hang as robes of mourning around the dwelling of the lost.

SERMON XL.

THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED EVERLASTING.

REVELATION xiv. 11.—"And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever."

THERE is a distinction in the character of the descendants of Adam. The effects of this distinction are plainly perceptible in men of every condition in life. Those, who fear God and keep his commandments, are permitted to enjoy a tranquillity of mind which passeth understanding. Whilst they, who neglect to do his will, find their way hard, and their course one of constant perplexity. They are conscious of no cheering emotions in view of eternity. They have no expectation of obtaining the treasure laid up in heaven. They see nothing beyond the grave to which they can reasonably look forward as an inducement to draw them onwards to eternity. Consequently their way is hard. Their minds are restless. And thus, on their passage to eternity, the wicked are subject to the most annoying perturbations. Their condition is represented by the troubled sea, whose waters cannot rest. This is the course of the wicked in life. But it is impossible for beings made to be immortal, to confine their attention to this world. They cannot but look beyond the boundaries of time. Even they, who wish to disbelieve—and who, with the basest and most criminal falsehood, declare, that they disbelieve a future state, even they, on the arrival of the hour of death, seem to awake, and to tremble in anticipation of eternity. Of all, who, in violation of manifest truth, and in a determinate exclusion of the light, have dared to deny the reality of the

world to which they are hastening, I know of scarcely any, who could retain his opinion in view of death. O, in that hour we are compelled to deal with facts. And if a denial of a world of retribution could blot it out of existence, then would the wicked openly, and earnestly, and loudly declare its non-existence. But in this hour they feel, that though they deny the fact; though in the present moment they assert, *that there is no heaven and no hell*, yet in the next they may be compelled, by the horror produced by the presence of these realities, to cry for a retreat from the woes that are breaking in on their guilty souls. This is the reason why their infidelity ordinarily retires, as they approach the grave; and their eye seems to glare with amazement; and their tongue to tremble at every utterance respecting eternity. There is something within them, which tells them—*Ye must live hereafter, and there is truth in the representation of the scriptures respecting the final condition of those who have neglected or refused to serve the Lord.* These representations are such as cannot but cause every heart that believes them, to tremble. We would not enter upon them with such haste as to preclude the possibility of considering well the steps which we take. We are all accountable beings. The scenes, therefore, which will be described in our hearing, will at length occur—not merely before our eyes, but even respecting ourselves. The thought of stating to you the scenes through which we must pass, causes my very bones to tremble. But as we must together endure the scrutiny of the judgment, and hear the final decision on our characters, it cannot be inappropriate to look forwards even *here*, and contemplate the end of those that fear not God, and obey not the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ.

One of the most noticeable circumstances in regard to the judgment, is the separation of the wicked from the

righteous. Here there is a manifest reference to the distinction of character, which prevails on this side of the grave. As men now possess distinct moral qualities in the view of Jehovah, they will at the great day be separated into two corresponding divisions. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."—"The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As, therefore, the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity. And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." This separation is not one of only a few days' duration. "Between us and you," said Abraham, "a great gulf is fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence."

The residence of the wicked is represented by figures the most tremendous. God forbid, that I should turn from the plain assertions of his word in my description of this region of despair. In Luke xvi. 28, it is called a "place of torment." In Matthew xxv. 41, the wicked are commanded to "depart into everlasting fire." In Mark ix. 45, 46, it is called "hell fire, where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched." In other places, it is denominated "outer darkness"—"a furnace of fire"—"blackness of darkness"—"to be tormented

with *fire and brimstone*"—"the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." These are indeed figures of some tremendous reality. And it is not wonderful that the rich man said, "I am tormented in this flame." I would never read these awful emblems of future wo, without having my mind wrought up to a high degree of intensity to avoid the ruin which shall come on the ungodly. I would never hear them without feeling the importance of fleeing from the wrath to come. However little I may know of the real nature of the sufferings which the impenitent must undergo, I cannot but see, that they are extremely terrific. And however little you, my hearers, may apprehend of the specific essence of these pains, you cannot but regard them as overwhelming. And you cannot but feel impelled to turn hastily from whatever tends to draw down upon you the just judgments of God.

But is there any one of you who, though he do not deny the existence of future punishment, yet believes it to be limited in duration? Is there any of you who believe that his agonies will thus come to an end; and, therefore, that it is of little consequence whether he serve God, or neglect him? Now, let me ask, how soon do you expect these agonies to cease, and your horror to be exchanged for delight? Do you believe, that after ten thousand years of such wo as is described by a lake of fire, you will be liberated, and treated as the servants of the living God? And for a few fleeting years, or months, or days, of such enjoyment as sin can confer, will you consent to suffer for ten thousand years the distresses of the world of wo? Or, do you suppose that this period of suffering will cease after a period of one thousand years? And will you, then, for a few years of sinful gratification, consent to suffer the pains and the horrors of the world of torment—and to weep, and wail,

and gnash your teeth for a thousand years? On the supposition, that the punishment of the wicked shall terminate, it is extreme folly for any one to continue in sin.

But the scriptures give no authority to conclude, that the doors of the world of wo will be opened, and release proclaimed to the prisoners in the abodes of despair. The eternity of this punishment is declared in terms whose meaning is clear, beyond the possibility of honest mistake. To put this point beyond dispute, I will read those passages which inculcate this doctrine in unquestionable terms; "*The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment.* But the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire." "Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." "And many of them that sleep in the dust shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." They are "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."

Now, who can doubt the meaning of expressions like these? Had God said, "These shall go away" into a limited punishment—into a fire that shall be quenched—who would ever have thought of saying, that he meant *eternal punishment or unquenchable fire?* But it is as incorrect to change these terms in one way as in the other. There are as many difficulties to be encountered, and as many palpable inconsistencies to be committed.

And then it should be remembered, that only a very small portion of the passages which relate to future punishment, have been cited; and if it be necessary to

add to the fearful number already quoted, I might add, They "shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever."—*Rev.* x.

But is there still a doubt respecting the duration of these punishments? Let it, then, be remembered, that in all the statements respecting eternity, heaven and hell are set in direct opposition to each other. The duration of the one is expressed in precisely the same terms as that of the other. Is heaven denominated everlasting life; hell is called everlasting punishment. From every source, except that of the wishes of the sinner, we find full evidence of this awful truth. These wishes lead him to adopt any method to divest his mind of the impressions made by this tremendous anticipation. And having learned what every attentive reader of the Bible had long known, that the term "hell" is frequently used for the "grave," he regards it as undeniable, that in every instance it means the depository of the dead. He may indeed admit, that it is sometimes used to denote a state of punishment, but at the same time he is careful to declare, that this state will soon end. He regards it as certain, that the enjoyments of heaven are eternal; and with confidence he asserts, that all will at length stand together on Mount Zion. This is one of the many ways in which mortals persuade themselves into an error, whose tendency is exceedingly hurtful. Perhaps they have never considered the ease with which this argument may be made to prove, that the delights of heaven shall terminate, and all the sons of men descend to the world of wo. The term "heaven"—to make an argument exactly corresponding with that which I have just stated—the term "heaven" is often used to denote the sky. It is very doubtful whether it is ever used as the name of the future residence of the righteous; or if it is, and if they ever

arrive there, it is certain they will remain but a short time. There is an eternal hell, and into it all mankind must at length enter. Such is the result at which we necessarily arrive, by adopting the same process of reasoning in regard to heaven as others adopt in respect to hell.

In the same manner could we show, that all the other statements by which men attempt to disprove the truth of those threats, which the Bible contains, are unfounded. We regard the very benevolence of God as pledged to promote the highest interests of his kingdom. We feel, that the same propensity which leads him to seek the good of his creatures, by providing for their wants, and pouring upon them a profusion of comforts, will impel him to restrain those who disturb the peace, infringe the rights, or seize the possessions of others. Yes; when the benevolence of Jehovah has tried every effort to reclaim us, without success, then it is compelled to manifest itself in making us examples of the effects of sin, that others may beware. And as there is no reason to suppose, that our attachment to sin will be diminished, so there is no ground to infer, that we shall ever be reclaimed from our wanderings by the woes of the world which we enter.

After all other arguments in favor of a release from the world of wo are shown to be without foundation, we are often asked, "Will not an all-merciful God interpose, and rescue his children from a destruction so terrible? To this I reply, that it is impossible for us to know what *an all-merciful* God will do. We confess ourselves utterly unacquainted with such a being. The God whom we have known—the God who made the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and every thing that moveth on the face of the deep, is a Being of *justice* as well as of mercy. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne." All the illustrations of

his perfections, contained in the scriptures, evince that he has an inflexible regard for righteousness. Whilst, then, we cheerfully admit that he is merciful; whilst we cling to this attribute as dear to our hearts; we would remember, that the time appropriated to its exercise is in this life. There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave to which we hasten; and at the resurrection we come forth, not to enjoy new opportunities to repent and to secure salvation, but to hear the decision of omniscience, *and to enter on our interminable destiny.* Here, then, let us stop; and in the full remembrance of the description of the awful scenes to which we hasten, if we continue impenitent, let us turn immediately from every sin; so iniquity shall not prove our ruin.

Let us not attempt to remove the impulse to repentance which God has here given us. Let us no longer flatter ourselves that this period will never come. The very indulgence of such an impression is disrespectful to Jehovah. He is the Ruler of the universe. A good ruler will attempt to restrain iniquity by punishments calculated to influence the mind, the heart, and the life of every individual. And what other prospect of punishment will have sufficient power to restrain the ungodly? The highest penalties of human law cannot keep back from daring transgression, those who have fully cast off the fear of Jehovah, and the anticipation of a world of wo. Now, it was the knowledge of the practical influence of this truth, which led him to proclaim it in the hearing of his subjects. And will he be so unfaithful as not to perform it? Will he suffer the enemies of his holy government to pour forth on him the eternal reproach of being compelled to resort, *for the support of his authority, to unreal terrors?* and of coming under the necessity of *deceiving* his subjects, in order to rule

them? No. *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but his word shall never fail.* And having satisfied ourselves that he will not violate his word, let us not attempt to cherish the opinion, that these expressions do not denote eternal wo. For if any combination of words can express such a thought, then are those assertions which God has written, respecting the future state of the wicked, fully expressive of it. O, what can more clearly develope the designs of God, in regard to the future condition of the unrighteous, than the expression, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment?" "*The smoke of their torment ascendeth up, for ever and ever.*" And as it is necessary for God to restrain iniquity by appropriate penalties; and as he only, who sees the end from the beginning, can know what will effect this object; and as he has declared what the emergency of the case requires, who shall dare to say, *that it will never be inflicted?*

The subject which has now been discussed in your hearing, is one of immense importance to every individual. There is now, by regeneration, a distinction in the human family. This distinction will continue till time shall be no more; unless the impenitent turn, and submit to the authority of *Immanuel.* Here is a refuge from the storm—a retreat from the tempest—which shall eventually overtake the ungodly. Whilst it is called to-day, awake to righteousness, and escape from perdition. Soon dreary death will come. Soon, if you remain impenitent, the woes of eternity will have commenced; and the smoke, which ascendeth up for ever and ever, will have begun to go up from your unhappy abode.

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